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ABSTRACT

Previous research has examined either the effects of strategy instruction or the effects of literature-based instruction on children's literacy learning. Much less is known, however, about the combination of teacher-led strategy instruction within a literature-based framework. A qualitative case study explored what diverse second-grade students learned about reading, writing, and literature through a yearlong program of strategy instruction integrated within a rich, literature-based environment. Data sources collected by the teacher-researchers and a participant-observer in the classroom included personal journals kept by both investigators, individual student interviews and interviews with parents and care givers, videotapes of regular classroom literacy activities, artifacts of students' reading and writing, assessments of students' literacy learning, and the teacher-researcher's daily plan book. A content analysis revealed students grew in overall instructional reading level and came to view reading as a natural component of the school day; demonstrated high levels of engagement with books; developed skill in word identification, fluency, and comprehension; and grew in written composition abilities. Findings can be interpreted within a framework of teachers striving for balance and equilibrium within the curricular elements of literature envisionment and contextualized strategy instruction and a blend of teacher-initiated instruction and instruction responsive to students. (Contains 107 references, 77 references to works of children's literature, and 3 tables and 2 figures of data.) (Author/RS)

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Delicate Balances: Striving for Curricular and Instructional Equilibrium in a Second-Grade, Literature/Strategy-Based Classroom

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The National Reading Research Center (NRRC) is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research on reading and reading instruction. The NRRC is operated by a consortium of the University of Georgia and the University of Maryland College Park in collaboration with researchers at several institutions nationwide.

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Delicate Balances: Striving for Curricular and Instructional Equilibrium in a Second-Grade, Literature/Strategy-Based Classroom

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Abstract. *Previous research has examined either the effects of strategy instruction or the effects of literature-based instruction on children's literacy learning. Much less is known, however, about the combination of teacher-led strategy instruction within a literature-based framework. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore what diverse second-grade students learned about reading, writing, and literature through a yearlong program of strategy instruction integrated within a rich, literature-based environment. Data sources collected by the first author (Jim), who was the full-time teacher for the entire school year, and the second author (Gay), who was a participant observer in the classroom, included personal journals kept by both investigators, individual student interviews and interviews with parents and care givers, videotapes of regular classroom literacy activities, artifacts of students' reading and writing, assessments of students' literacy learning, and the first author's daily plan book. A content analysis revealed students grew in overall instructional reading level and came to view reading as a natural component of the school day; demonstrated high levels of engagement with books; developed skill in word identification, fluency, and comprehension; and grew in written composition abilities. The authors interpreted these findings within a framework of teachers striving for balance and equilibrium within the curricular elements of literature envisionment and contextualized strategy instruction and a blend of teacher-initiated instruction and instruction responsive to students.*

What do children learn about reading and writing within a literature- and strategy-based reading program? Can a teacher provide students reading and writing strategy instruction that includes teacher-initiated lessons as well as instruction that is responsive to students' needs and interests? How can a literature/strategy-based program be structured such that students not only acquire literacy skills but also develop and sustain an appreciation of literature, reading, and writing? Are the instructional goals of promoting both students' skill and will to learn, use, and enjoy reading and writing complementary or competitive? Can teachers achieve these goals in classrooms with high proportions of low-income or minority children, many of whom struggle in their literacy development? In this study, we address these questions by examining the effects of a year-

long program of reading and writing strategy instruction within a literature-based classroom on second-grade students' knowledge about reading, writing, and literature. Specifically, we sought to determine whether literacy strategy instruction could be integrated within a literature-based environment such that students could develop concurrently (a) the skills and strategies involved with reading and writing, (b) a knowledge and appreciation of children's literature, and (c) the desire to engage in reading and writing tasks for learning and pleasure. The inquiry involved teacher research, with the first author (Jim) being the full-time teacher and the second author (Gay) being a participant observer in the classroom.

Theoretical Background

In this study, we explored the interface of literature and instruction within an elementary school classroom; therefore, theoretical and empirical perspectives on use of literature and instructional strategies for young children guide this inquiry. We have conceptualized this theoretical overview in terms of two balances: a curriculum balance between literature envisionment (Langer, 1995) and skill/strategy instruction, and an instructional balance between teacher-initiated instruction and instruction responsive to students' needs and interests.

Curriculum Balance

The instruction provided children in this study was within the general framework referred to as literature-based reading instruction. Literature-based instruction involves the teaching of reading and writing abilities and the development of literature appreciation through the use of authentic reading materials written for children and young adults (Cox & Zarillo, 1993; Cullinan, 1987). Several models of literature-based reading instruction have been proposed (e.g., Heald-Taylor, 1996; Hiebert & Colt, 1989; Strickland, 1992; Zarillo, 1989), and numerous iterations of literature-based reading programs can be found in the professional literature (e.g., Cullinan, 1992; Galda, Cullinan, & Strickland, 1993; Johnson & Louis, 1987; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996; Roser & Martinez, 1995; Teale, 1992; Wepner & Feeley, 1993; Wood & Moss, 1992). Central to all literature-based programs is the importance of having students spend considerable amounts of time engaged with books by reading and responding to quality children's literature. Many case studies, teacher research inquiries, and classroom chronicles have supported the use of a literature-based framework for promoting students' literary appreciation and response (e.g., Hancock & Hill, 1988; Routman, 1988, 1991; Tompkins & McGee, 1993; Walmsley, 1992; see syntheses of McGee, 1992, and Short, 1995).

As the term indicates, literature-based instruction involves a curricular balance between literature and instructional activities. For example, Hiebert and Colt (1989) characterized literature-based instruction as involving a balance of two dimensions: literature selection and instructional format. Our conception of curriculum balance involves a similar view: that instruction within the context of literature is an effective and efficient way to provide students skills and strategies in reading and writing.

Literature Envisionment

For this study, we employed Langer's (1995) concept of *literary envisionment* to support our conception of literature and literary response. According to Langer, envisionment referred to

> the world of understanding a person has at any point of time. Envisionments are text-worlds in the mind, and they differ from individual to individual. . . . The word *envisionment* refers to the understanding a student (or teacher) has about a text, whether it is being read, written, discussed, or tested. Such envisionments are subject to change at any time as ideas unfold and new ideas come to mind. (pp. 9–10)

Envisionment-building can involve many forms of teacher and student actions, but essential to envisionment in a classroom environment "is the belief that literature *is* thought-provoking and that students *are* competent thinkers" (Langer, 1995, p. 56). This view of literature as envisionment leads to several principles of literary practice in classrooms that include (a) the assumption that students are capable of making sense of literary experiences; (b) asking questions is a natural, critical part of experiencing literature; (c) group discussions foster collective and individual literary interpretations; and (d) various perspectives on literature are desirable, inevitable, and important (pp. 57–60). The envisionment framework supports the literature selection, interaction, and response elements of Jim's classroom literacy program.

Skill and Strategy Instruction

Most fully articulated literature-based approaches involve instruction in reading and writing strategies within the context of literature (Tomkins & McGee, 1993; Weisman, 1992; Yopp & Yopp, 1992). For example, Routman (1991) was clear about the importance of teaching reading strategies in conjunction with immersion in quality literature, although she emphasizes that effective literature-based skill or strategy instruction must be crafted carefully: "Application of a skill to another context is far more likely to occur when the skill has been taught in a meaningful context that considers the needs of the learners" (p. 135).

Langer (1995) also acknowledged the importance of achieving a curricular equilibrium in an envisionment perspective, within which "teachers support students to work through their understanding on their own and with one another but also help when it is necessary" (p. 80). Students and the teacher puzzle through interesting, provocative texts together within an environment in which "teachers serve neither as the sole holders of knowledge nor as evaluators. But they do a great deal of responsive teaching" (p. 80). However, this responsive teaching is "situation-specific" (p. 122), that is, associated with a real text and a genuine desire to grapple with meaning. Jim's classroom literacy program balanced literary envisionment with instruction in foundational reading and writing skills and strategies (e.g., decoding, literal comprehension, mechanics and punctuation) as well as instruction in higher-order reading, writing, and thinking strategies (e.g., literary genre, characterization, descriptive writing, author study).

Instructional Balance

Instruction can be conceived of and implemented in multiple forms (e.g., Stahl & Hayes, 1996), and variations of instruction are de-

scribed within literature-based programs (e.g., Heald-Taylor, 1996; Hiebert & Colt, 1989; Routman, 1988, 1991; Strickland, 1992; Zarillo, 1989). Most proponents of literature-based programs recommend a mix of instructional formats. For example, Hiebert and Colt (1989) viewed instruction along a dimension of teacher and student responsibility, ranging from significant teacher responsibility (teacher-led instruction) to significant student responsibility (independent application). Similarly, Strickland (1992) described a literature-based program as a combination of teacher-assisted and independent reading and writing activities, with a teacher's role being to strive for a "balance between teacher-directed and independent activities" (p. 114). Durkin (1990) suggested that a reasonable balance of skill and strategy instruction can be attained by combining preplanned lessons with spontaneous lessons, and other writers have argued for integrating contextualized reading and writing strategy instruction within a literature-based or whole language environment (McIntyre & Pressley, 1996). Drawing from this literature, our conception of the instructional balance in a literature-based program is one of teacher-initiated instruction and instruction responsive to students' needs and interests.

Teacher-Initiated Instruction

Although a few proponents of literature-based instruction eschew the teaching of reading skills or strategies, arguing that such lessons limit students' engagement with books and learning to read through practice (e.g., Cox & Zarillo, 1993, p. 16), most acknowledge that skill or strategy instruction is necessary. Routman (1991) commented that "It has taken me many years to become convinced that all the skills are in the literature and that the literature itself can be used as a vehicle to teach skills strategically" (p. 135).

We acknowledge that minilessons (Atwell, 1987) and spontaneous lessons are powerful because of their immediacy and rich context. Some writers, however, have expressed concern that minilessons may not provide students instruction of sufficient magnitude and intensity (Spiegel, 1992), particularly for those who struggle with reading and writing development (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). Additionally, not all fundamental literacy strategies may present themselves as teachable moments (Baumann, 1991).

Struggling reader and writers are likely to benefit from the types of programs typically provided the good readers and writers in a classroom (Allington, 1983), whose teachers have an expectation of student success, focus on meaning, and provide fluency-oriented instruction (Hoffman et al., 1984). Furthermore, struggling readers need both specialized instructional techniques to help them develop skill in word identification and comprehension (Clay, 1993; Cunningham & Allington, 1994) and a rich literate environment that includes immersion in literature and lots of practice reading (Hall & Cunningham, 1996; Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994). Unfortunately, most struggling readers are in special reading programs that focus on neither literature reading nor strategy instruction (Johnston & Allington, 1991). Furthermore, most proven acceleration programs involve

either one-to-one (e.g., Clay, 1993; Pinnell et al., 1994) or small-group instruction (e.g., Hiebert & Taylor, 1994) and thus serve limited numbers of students. This leaves classroom teachers, whose students' reading abilities are likely to range from very limited to highly proficient, to search for ways to accommodate struggling readers while being responsible for an entire class of youngsters.

Delpit (1988, 1995) expressed concern that "indirect" or process-oriented approaches, such as literature-based instruction, may not be sufficient for children from minority cultural or linguistic groups. Delpit argued that process approaches may fail to provide minority children the explicit instruction needed to achieve access to "power code literacy" (mainstream oral and written language conventions) and thus preclude them from participating fully in the majority culture. As a result, some students—particularly those who are most in need of learning about the form and function of conventional written language—may not acquire the declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983) required to identify words, puzzle out the meaning of a text, or compose oral and written texts. Thus, struggling or minority students, as well as children making continuous progress in literacy development, will benefit from some teacher-initiated skill and strategy lessons.

The research on explicit, teacher-initiated instruction is voluminous and rich (e.g., Lysynchuk, Pressley, d'Ailly, Smith, & Cake, 1989; Pearson, 1984, 1985). Drawing from this literature, our teacher-initiated lessons included the elements of verbal explanation, modeling, guided practice, and independent practice (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983); provided for the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the student (Pearson & Fielding, 1991); and involved student monitoring of learning (Paris et al., 1983). Additionally, authentic pieces of literature were used for strategy and skill lessons (Baumann & Bergeron, 1993).

Instruction Responsive to Students

Although teacher-initiated instruction has a place in a literature-based program, there is considerable logic for balancing it with instruction that is responsive to students' instructional needs or interests (Cullinan, 1992; Raphael & Hiebert, 1996; Tompkins & McGee, 1993). Goodman and Goodman (1979, p. 139) asserted that "teaching children to read is not putting them into a garden of print and leaving them unmolested." Therefore, students need instruction, but Goodman and Goodman conceived of a special kind of child-centered, responsive, guiding instruction: "Reading instruction, particularly beginning instruction, has a vital role to play in creating and enhancing the conditions that will bring the readers' natural language-learning competence into play" (p. 139).

Atwell (1987), Routman (1988, 1991), and others (e.g., Strickland, 1992) have argued that in order to maximize the time children spend immersed in books and literature and to capitalize on the power of authentic reading and writing events, literature-based instruction can be effectively provided in the form of minilessons. An even less structured version of the

Curriculum Balance	Instructional Balance	
	Teacher-Initiated Instruction	Instruction Responsive to Students
Literature Envisionment	Teacher-led lessons or activities that involve teaching, guiding, or leading students to literary understanding, response, and appreciation.	Literature activities initiated, guided, or directed by individual students, peer groups, or cross-age groups.
Contextualized Skill and Strategy Instruction	Explicit instruction lessons in decoding, fluency, comprehension, writing, and other literacy skills and strategies.	Informal lessons emanating from the literate environment, or teachable moments within the context of literacy activities.

Figure 1. A conceptual framework for balancing literature and instruction within a literature-based literacy program.

minilesson involves teachable moments or on-the-spot instruction, which are highly contextualized lessons. Durkin (1990) referred to this as unplanned instruction, arguing that the immediacy and rich context enhances its effectiveness: "Other things being equal, unplanned instruction has a better chance of succeeding than planned instruction because the reason that prompts it is obvious to students" (p. 473). Our conception of instruction balances teacher-initiated lessons with instruction responsive to students. Therefore, Jim's literacy instructional program included teachable moments, abbreviated lessons, and informal one-to-one lessons as complements to the teacher-initiated lessons he devised and taught.

In summary, our view of curricular and instructional balances, as manifest in our teaching and research, is presented in Figure 1. It juxtaposes the curricular dimensions of literature envisionment and contextualized skill and strategy instruction to the instructional dimension of teacher-initiated and responsive instruction.

Integrating Instruction With Literature: Empirical Investigations

Research examining the combined effects of strategy instruction and immersion within a full classroom context is limited (Short, 1995). Further, extant research has tended to emphasize either the strategy instruction component *or* the literature-infusion element rather than exploring balanced, combined effects. Two studies (Block, 1993; Morrow, 1992) are particularly relevant because they investigated both literature and strategy instruction in regular, elementary classrooms as opposed to one-on-one or pull-out programs.

Block (1993) implemented a yearlong program for systematically teaching diverse children reading and thinking strategies through children's literature. Three hundred fifty-two students from 48 Grade 2 through 6 classrooms in 3 schools were randomly assigned, by classrooms, to experimental or control conditions. Students in the experimental classes were provided 1.5-hr lessons taught by research assistants twice weekly for 32 weeks. Lessons consisted of two parts: (a) teacher explanation and modeling of a cognitive strategy (e.g., decoding an unknown word, predicting to increase inferencing) through the use of written strategy application guides, and (b) application of the strategy through independent reading of self-selected literature. In control classes, research assistants aided the regular classroom teachers as they provided more conventional lessons that did not emphasize strategy instruction. Results showed significant findings favoring experimental students for the vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading scores of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Experimental students also outperformed controls in ability to transfer cognitive strategies to out-of-school applications and on a series of assessments of self-esteem and critical/creative thinking. Block concluded that her program of strategy instruction in a literature-based reading program served to "expand students' thinking and improve their reading abilities" (p. 150).

Morrow (1992) investigated the impact of a "literacy program that emphasized enjoyable, skill-oriented experiences with literature" (p. 252) on diverse children's literacy achievement, use of literature, and attitudes toward reading. One hundred sixty-six culturally diverse children in nine second-grade classrooms from two schools were randomly assigned, by classroom, to one of three groups: (a) an experimental group in which children were provided a literature-based reading and writing program that included literacy centers, teacher-directed literacy activities, and independent reading and writing periods as a complement to the existing basal reading program; (b) a second experimental group identical except for the addition of a component in which parents supported literacy activities at home; or (c) a control group in which teachers maintained the basal reader instructional program. Results on informal comprehension tests, measures of reading attitude, and records of books read in and out of school demonstrated superiority of the experimental classrooms over the control classrooms (but no differences between the two experimental groups). Morrow also reported comparable performance on the various literacy measures for the African American ($n = 72$) and European American children ($n = 60$) in the study. No significant between-group differences were recorded on the reading and language portions of the California Test of Basic Skills. Morrow concluded that "the combination of literature-based instruction with traditional basal reading instruction is more powerful than traditional instruction alone" and that "this investigation strengthens the claim for the inclusion of literature as an integral part of reading instruction with children from varied backgrounds" (p. 273).

These studies are significant for their varying emphases. Block (1993) investigated the effects of a systematic program of *strategy instruction* within a literature-based environ-

ment, and her work demonstrated improved thinking and strategic reading performance. In contrast, Morrow (1992) primarily explored the impact of a program of *rich, literature-based experiences*, and this program clearly had positive effects on all children's ability to respond and react to literary experiences. However, Block's study shed little light on students' development in literary knowledge and appreciation, and Morrow's study, which relied on basal lessons for strategy instruction, did not document significant strategic reading growth. In short, what these studies fail to clarify is the impact of a long-term, combined program of *both* contextualized skill and strategy instruction and literature envisionment.

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this study was to explore what diverse, second-grade students learned about reading, writing, and literature through a year-long, integrated program of literature envisionment and skill and strategy instruction. The combination of six characteristics distinguished this investigation in that: (a) It described predominantly low income and African American students' growth in ability and appreciation of reading, writing, and literature. (b) The instructional environment involved an entire class of students, many of whom were struggling readers and writers. (c) The research involved a year-long, naturalistic case study. (d) A literature/strategy-based program was designed to provide a curricular balance between literature envisionment and skill/strategy instruction. (e) The program was designed to provide an instructional balance between teacher-initiated lessons and lessons responsive to students' needs and interests. (f) The research was conducted from the "inside" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), with the classroom teacher and participant observer gathering and analyzing all data. The significance of the study rested in its ability to provide detailed empirical information about the nature and efficacy of a combined literature/strategy-based instructional program on children's concurrent development of reading and writing skills, knowledge and appreciation of literature, and motivation to use literacy for enjoyment and learning.

Method

Research Paradigm

The study was designed and conducted as a qualitative, interpretive case study (Merriam, 1988). A case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 16). Categories and properties of phenomena that captured the essence and specifics of the second-grade students' literacy learning across the school year were generated through the process of content analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study was interpretive (Merriam, 1988) in nature because these conceptual categories and properties were compared to the theoretical assumptions held by the investigators prior to the data gathering.

Jim reflected on the data as it was being gathered and assembled throughout the school year, primarily through his lengthy daily jour-

nal entries and accompanying lesson plans for the following day, characteristics of reflective teaching (Schon, 1983). Gay joined this process when she began participating in data collection and analysis in early spring of the school year. The considerable time constraints and demands on Jim, being a full-time teacher, precluded systematic, detailed data analysis across the school year (Baumann, 1996); hence, the major data analysis efforts commenced in June once the school year ended.

Researcher Perspectives

The design and implementation of this study were influenced by the experiences and theoretical perspectives of the two investigators (Alvermann, O'Brien, & Dillon, 1996). Jim, a university professor in reading education and former elementary school teacher, taught second grade full time for the entire school year while on leave from his university position (Baumann, 1995a). This study was conducted in his classroom. Gay, a doctoral student in reading education and former middle school reading teacher, gathered data and worked with the students in Jim's classroom during the final third of the school year. We both hold the view that acquiring meaning from text is the central goal of a literacy instructional program. We consider reading and writing acquisition to be a function of a rich, literate environment in which students are provided multiple opportunities to engage in meaning construction through functional oral and written expression and meaningful aural and reading comprehension. We view children's literature as the medium—the linguistic stock of the literacy soup—through which language exploration and learning occur. We view each learner as capable, enthusiastic, and intellectually and linguistically equipped to acquire the ability to read, write, and use oral language functionally. We consider language learning a sometimes solitary and oftentimes social process that involves an interaction among the students' cultural, social, and linguistic background and experiences, all of which represent capital and resources for language growth. Parents and other care givers, siblings, and extended family members play a crucial role in nurturing and supporting children's linguistic development at home and in school classrooms.

We view a teacher's role as central and critical for children to develop oral and written language abilities to their full potential. We believe that teachers must carefully create a fertile learning environment. This environment involves continuous opportunities for students to view, interact with, and learn about print in functional ways in the classroom, including, but not limited to, the presence of a large classroom library and ample tools for creating and responding to oral and written texts; opportunities to hear literature read aloud and stories related orally; and regular, sustained, and self-selected independent and collaborative reading and writing periods.

We also believe that teachers have the right and responsibility to orchestrate instruction such that students are both immersed in and explicitly taught about language so that they can achieve levels of independence in decoding and encoding print, comprehending oral and written texts, and expressing themselves in speech and writing. Therefore, we believe that

explicit, teacher-led lessons in fundamental reading, writing, and literature abilities, embedded in the context of authentic texts and natural language tasks, are important components of a literacy program. In sum, we believe in the theory and practice behind the model presented in Figure 1; that is, that sensible, effective, and efficient literacy instruction involves several balances between and within a literary envisionment (Langer, 1995) perspective and context-rich skill and strategy instruction.

Participants

Participants were students in Jim's second-grade class at Fowler Drive Elementary School, a prekindergarten to Grade 5 public school of 455 students in Athens, Georgia, a middle-sized community in the U.S. South. Athens is culturally diverse, with approximately 26% African American residents, 69% European American residents, and 5% residents of other cultural groups. Although economically dominated by a major state-supported university, Athens is a bimodal economic and social community, with one group of primarily White, middle-income and above, blue-collar workers and professionals, and a second group of primarily Black, low-income residents employed in service jobs or on public assistance. Average per capita income in the community is low ($15,715 annually), with 27% of the households having annual incomes of less than $10,000.

Fowler Drive Elementary is located in a particularly low-income area of Athens. Drug abuse and violent crime were problems within the neighborhood. On the other hand, Fowler Drive parents were highly involved with and supportive of their children's schooling (Baumann & Thomas, 1996; Shockley, Michalove, & Allen, 1995). At the time of the research, the Fowler Drive student population was 60% African American students, 39% European American students, and 1% students of other racial or ethnic groups. Seventy-five percent of Fowler students qualified for free- or reduced-price lunches.

Comprehensive selection (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) was used to ensure adequate representation of the classroom population. Because each of the second-graders in the class had a unique repertoire of knowledge about literacy, it was important not to risk the loss of this variation. There were a total of 19 students enrolled in Jim's class at one time or another during the school year, with his class averaging about 16 students for most of the year. The 13 students present in Jim's class for the majority of the school year (7 or more months) were defined as the comprehensive population, and these students were selected as participants. Of the 13 case-study children, 7 were female and 6 were male; 9 were African American and 4 were European American. Eight children were eligible for Title I, and 8 qualified for a state program for children deemed to be developmentally delayed in language. Two of the 13 target children were designated as behavior disordered; none were identified as gifted or talented.

Instructional Environment

During the 1994–1995 school year, Jim took a leave from his university position to

teach second grade full time on a university/school district job exchange (Baumann, 1995a). His position involved all the duties and responsibilities of a regular, full-time elementary classroom teacher. While teaching, he was associated with the National Reading Research Center and the School Research Consortium (Baumann, Allen, & Shockley, 1994), a teacher-research community, within which he was a participant. It is within Jim's classroom that the present study was conducted. Gay was a participant observer in this study during the final third of the school year. She gathered audio and video data, interviewed students formally and informally, kept anecdotal records, and worked with the students instructionally while in the classroom.

In this section, we describe the instructional environment in Jim's second-grade classroom. We begin with a discussion of the classroom library and how it served as the center of literacy activities in Room 8. Second, we paint a picture of the ways in which literacy curriculum and instruction were balanced by describing the reading, language arts, and literature activities in a typical school day. Third, we address how students' individual differences were acknowledged and accommodated in Jim's literacy program.

The classroom library. Jim's classroom library averaged about 500 trade books, although the exact titles changed throughout the school year. Anticipating that he might have a number of struggling readers in his class, Jim set out at the beginning of the year a mix of easier reading books, using an "eyeball test" (skimming a book to assess its approximate readability level) to select titles that were no more difficult than about a second-grade reading level. Multiple genres were included in the library, and Jim made a special point to have many titles that represented cultural and ethnic diversity, particularly books by and about African Americans.

As the year progressed, the library changed and grew. Children's published and bound collections of stories they had written were added to the collection. The class was continually engaging in author studies (e.g., Ezra Jack Keats, Donald Crews, Eric Carle, Arnold and Anita Lobel, Frank Asch, Marc Brown, Tomie DePaola) or content/theme studies (e.g., "ABC Books," "Halloween Books," "Pig Books," "Counting Books," "Books about Famous African Americans," "Space Books," "Plant Books," "Clifford Books"). When an author study or content/theme was introduced, multiple titles within the category were set out on the "Featured Books" display, with these books remaining in the general classroom library once the formal study was completed.

To accommodate the range of students' reading abilities and interests, Jim employed Fielding and Roller's (1992) "making difficult books accessible and easy books acceptable" perspective when planning and designing various book-interaction activities across the school day. This perspective enabled all children to have at their fingertips books that they could read independently, and they were provided various scaffolded support structures (e.g., buddy reading, cross-grade tutors, shared reading, choral reading) for enjoying and learning from more challenging titles. As demonstrated through the following discussion of a typical day in Room 8, Jim's classroom

Time	Activity	Plans
7:30–8:00	Before School	Math p. 410, and then read quietly.
8:00–8:10	Organization	Pledge, Announcements, etc.
8:15–8:45	P.E.	Ms. Lane in the gym; restroom on return.
8:50–9:50	Reading	**Yellow Group** 1. Begin reading *The Josefina Story Quilt* [Coerr, 1986], a theme related book for Book 1 in *Come One, Come All* [Pikulski et al., 1993]. Have the kids review the theme (Growing Up—physically, emotionally, etc.). 2. Read *Dakota Dugout* [Turner, 1985] to set the mood for the book the kids will read. Explain that the story they will read also deals with pioneers, but in a somewhat different fashion. 3. Have the kids brainstorm what they know about pioneers, wagon trains, and a trip west in the 1800s. Read the "Author's Note" at the end of the book to get the kids warmed up. 4. Introduce the character names and a few other words: Josefina (chicken), Faith, Ma, Pa, California. 5. Begin reading the first chapter "Josefina" as a group. 6. Review predicting, and then have each student write two predictions in their steno notebooks. 7. If still time, have the kids buddy up and reread the chapter. **JB**: Do a genre lesson on historical fiction on a subsequent day. Also read related titles to the kids: *The Patchwork Quilt* [Flournoy, 1985], *The Keeping Quilt* [Polacco, 1988], and *The Rag Coat*. [Mills, 1991].
		Red Group 1. Opening "Private" read: Reread (a) all stories in *Morning Bells* [Baumann et al., 1993], and (b) Wiggle Works [1994] books I've selected in packs for the kids. 2. Preview next story: Have kids look through "Shoes from Grandpa" and have them predict what it will be about. Write predictions on board for verification as we read it. 3. New vocabulary: Write, discuss, and read words from story (see highlighted words on pp. 342–343). Do a semantic map of "School Clothes" to list vocabulary. 4. Story reading: (a) read it aloud to the kids as they look at the pictures; (b) read it again, having them track print as you read it; (c) do shared reading of the story for a third pass. 5. Ending "Private" read: Reread "Shoes from Grandpa" and stories from *Out Came the Sun* [Baumann et al., 1993], or books of personal choice.
9:50–10:20	Story, Snack, & Recess	Have kids clean desks as you begin reading *Marvin Redpost: Is He a Girl?* [Sachar, 1993] to them.
10:20–10:35	Class Meeting	Assign new jobs for the week, time for sharing, & read new picture books to the kids.
10:35–11:15	Math	Review addition with renaming on board (various configurations). Present format for today's work, which is pp. 221–222. Give them "Triple Treat" assignments if done early.

11:15–11:45	Writing	Have kids select writing topics of their choice. Hold a brief review "topic brainstorming" session to get them thinking about selecting old and new topics for their compositions. Have them spend time drafting new compositions or working on old ones.
11:45–12:15	LUNCH	
12:15–12:30	Read Aloud	Restroom followed by read-aloud time.
12:30–1:00	5th Grade Reading-Writing Buddies	Buddy up as per usual—half of my kids to Ms. Erickson's classroom, and half of her kids to mine.
1:00–1:15	Recess	
1:15–1:45	Weekly Reader	12-16-94 issue to read, share, & discuss.
1:45–2:15	Science	Begin new unit on solar system. Have kids select one of the nonfiction trade books you've assembled to read to them to kick off the unit. If time, have them begin decorating their solar system folder.
2:25	Dismissal	Walk the kids to the busses.

Figure 2. A daily lesson plan for Jim's second-grade class.

library served as the centerpiece of his literacy program, and the numerous, ever-changing titles within it were accessed daily multiple times and in different ways.

A Typical Day in Room 8

Jim's overall philosophy toward teaching and learning literacy was based upon the three-part principle that immersion in a rich literate environment, contextualized instruction in literacy skills and strategies, and lots of practice in literate activities are essential for success in reading, writing, and oral language (Baumann, 1995b). To illustrate how Jim attempted to implement this philosophy and to achieve the curricular and instructional balances discussed previously, we describe a typical day in Jim's second-grade class in Room 8 at Fowler Drive Elementary School. Figure 2 is a reproduction of Jim's lesson plan for a day in early January, and the following narrative elaborates on events for that day that had literacy foci.

Before school. The children straggled into the classroom between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m., with most arriving by 7:45. Although officially outside the school day, this time had important social and academic purposes. It was a time Jim visited informally with the children and worked with them one-on-one, listening to them read, going over math problems, or helping them edit a current composition. If they had corrections ("fixes" in the classroom vernacular) on math work from the previous day, the children would find these papers on their desks when they arrived in the classroom. Informal assessment also occurred during this time. For example, although not on the lesson plan, Jim used some of before-school time this day to begin mid-year informal reading inven-

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tories (IRI) with several of the children. All the children had a review math activity to complete, after which they could select books from the classroom library to read for enjoyment.

Reading. Following the morning organizational time (announcements, lunch count, etc.) and a special-teacher period (physical education this particular day), the class moved into the hour-long daily reading strategies time. The children were organized in two groups for the Reading period: The Yellow Group consisted of children who could productively read and learn from the district-adopted Grade 2 reading program materials, and the Red Group consisted of children who were less skillful and worked with Grade 1 materials that Jim was able to secure from another publisher. Instruction in decoding and comprehension strategies was incorporated into the literature the children read, and all students read whole, unadapted texts, both in anthology form and in separately bound trade books. Mrs. Carolyn Winn, an experienced paraprofessional who was assigned to Jim during the Reading period, assisted with instruction and monitored the children's independent work.

As shown in Figure 2, each group engaged in multiple reading and writing activities across the Reading period. Although the nature of the texts dictated the exact daily structure for the period, students typically engaged in three kinds of activities:

1. *Reading practice times*. Students read connected texts a significant amount of time during the Reading period. Some of these were structured reading activities; others were more open-ended. For example, the Red Group's Private Read was structured in that Jim individually selected previously read, familiar books for each student to read (about six total titles). During this 10–15 min reading period, Jim would circulate among the children, listening to them read and providing on-the-spot instruction. In contrast, during the Red Group's class-ending Free Read period, children selected and read books exclusively of their choice and interest.

2. *Strategy lessons*. Instruction in word identification, vocabulary, comprehension, literature reading, and writing strategies was presented through three different lesson structures: (a) *Elaborated strategy lessons* were preplanned, teacher-initiated lessons (Baumann, Seifert-Kessell, & Jones, 1992), which typically involved a thorough introduction to a skill or strategy. Although Jim did not teach an elaborated lesson this particular day, he made a note at the end of the Yellow Group portion of his plan to prepare and teach an elaborated lesson on the genre of historical fiction in a day or two. This lesson was tied to the children's current reading of the historical fiction trade book *The Josefina Story Quilt* (Coerr, 1986). (b) *Brief strategy lessons* were planned, teacher-led review or extension lessons in which a previously introduced strategy (in elaborated form) was revisited. These lessons were much akin to minilessons (Atwell, 1987). Jim conducted a brief strategy lesson on predicting with the Yellow Group on this particular day, again drawing from the literature the children were reading for instruction and application. (c) *Impromptu strategy lessons* were unplanned (Durkin, 1990) in that Jim seized an instructional opportunity through an on-the-spot lesson that flowed from the reading or discus-

sion of a selection. For example, when beginning to read *The Josefina Story Quilt* this day, one Yellow Group child noted that this was a different kind of make-believe book in that the story could really happen, unlike other fiction works that she knew could not happen (e.g., *Danny and the Dinosaur*, Hoff, 1958; *Frog and Toad are Friends*, Lobel, 1970). This led to an impromptu lesson on genre in which Jim and the children explored different kinds of "make believe" stories that included historical fiction, realistic fiction, and fantasy. This impromptu lesson provided an excellent entrée to Jim's plans for an elaborated lesson on text genre.

3. *Reading/language arts activities*. The children also engaged in literature extension and language arts activities. For example, Jim read *Dakota Dugout* (Turner, 1985) to the Yellow Group students to provide background and set the mood for their introduction to *The Josefina Story Quilt*. In subsequent days, the Yellow Group created a large quilt on a bulletin board that captured the children's own life experiences, as an extension of the quilt Josefina was making in the story they were reading. Later Jim read additional books that dealt with the topic of quilts as a means to memorialize important events in a person's life.

A considerable amount of strategy instruction was integrated into the Reading period. However, teacher-initiated literacy instruction occurred across the school day. For example, elaborated and brief writing strategy lessons were included in the daily writing period during which students often crafted compositions that had intertextual links to the books they were reading or listening to during read alouds. Impromptu strategy lessons on literary elements and response often occurred in conjunction with daily read-aloud and independent reading activities. Elaborated or brief decoding instruction lessons were reinforced and extended through spelling lessons and writing activities. In summary, the Reading period provided the children an intensive, daily time for engaging in structured and open reading activities linked to quality literature that was at students' instructional reading levels.

Story, snack, and recess. Following the Reading period, the children took a rest room break and ate mid-morning snacks. During this daily time, Jim read chapter books to the children. This particular day, he began reading a new book, *Marvin Redpost: Is He a Girl?* (Sachar, 1993), a fairly easy-reading, humorous fiction title that the children enjoyed immensely (a number of the students subsequently checked this title out of the library as well as other titles within Sachar's "Marvin Redpost" series). Across the school year, Jim read a mix of fiction titles to the children that included contemporary works like this one as well as more classic titles such as Roald Dahl's (1961) *James and the Giant Peach*, Beverly Cleary's "Mouse and the Motorcycle" trilogy (1965, 1970, 1982), and Judy Blume's (1980) *Superfudge*. Nonfiction titles were also read aloud (e.g., books on the solar system connected to the science unit initiated that day) as were chapter books that included minority characters. For example, the children enjoyed hearing and later reading themselves several of Ann Cameron's books about Julian (*Stories Julian Tells*, 1981; *More Stories Julian Tells*, 1986; *Julian, Dream Doctor*, 1990), and the children

were fascinated with the history presented in nonfiction read-aloud titles such as *"Wanted: Dead or Alive:" The True Story of Harriet Tubman* (McGovern, 1965) and *If You Lived in the Time of Martin Luther King* (Levine, 1994).

Class meeting. After recess, children convened in front of the Reader's/Writer's Chair for the daily Class Meeting, a time for sharing, conversation, celebration, and reading aloud. The children brought things in to share and talk about, and they relayed interesting, happy, or sad events in their lives. For example, this day we celebrated Shawn's birthday, which had occurred over the preceding weekend. As per tradition, the room was decorated with balloons and banners, and we sang "Happy Birthday." Shawn received the standard birthday gift, a personalized children's book inscribed by Jim, which in this case was *Teammates* (Golenbock, 1990), the story of Jackie Robinson integrating professional baseball and how Pee Wee Reese befriended him (Shawn was a fine athlete and a sports enthusiast). Fascinated with the book, Shawn asked Jim to read it aloud, which led to a serious, thoughtful discussion of racism in sports then and now.

Picture book reading was an important element of the Class Meeting time. Read-aloud titles came up spontaneously as happened this day; other books were recommended or selected by the children; Jim chose books he wished to read aloud; and all author studies or Featured Books were introduced during a Class Meeting. During the year, well over 150 picture books were read aloud during this period. The children also regularly requested that Jim read poetry from several anthologies he had available, with favorite class poets becoming Shel Silverstein (e.g., *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, 1974; *Light in the Attic*, 1981), Jack Prelutsky (e.g., *The New Kid on the Block*, 1984), and Myra Cohn Livingston (e.g., *Celebrations*, 1985; *Let Freedom Ring: A Ballad of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 1992).

Writing. The Writing period involved process writing on mostly self-selected topics. Some compositions were taken to the published stage, appearing in a dozen class books published across the school year. Some published class books were simple collections of children's compositions (e.g., "Class Stories," "January Stories"); some were seasonal (e.g., "Holiday Stories," "Valentine Stories"); and others involved naturally emerging themes (e.g., "Birthday and Other Stories" resulted from writings about several children's birthdays). Writing strategy instruction in mechanical skills (e.g., punctuation, capital letters) and process skills (e.g., revising, editing) were integrated into this period. For example, on this particular day, Jim did a brief strategy lesson on topic brainstorming and selection (an elaborated lesson on this topic had occurred previously in the school year), reviewing with the children ways to think about topics, how to generate topics in collaboration with other students, how to record potential topics, and how topics could be used to prompt initial drafts.

Reading/Writing Buddies. After lunch Jim spent a few minutes reading aloud from the new Marvin Redpost chapter book, after which it was time for the weekly Reading/Writing Buddies time. Jim's students worked one-on-one with students from Jane Erickson's fifth-grade class next door. The second- and fifth-

grade children read hundreds of trade books, exchanged letters with one another, and shared entries in the second-graders' reading journals. The students developed personal relationships with one another, and this weekly reading and writing practice period was productive, popular, and great fun for everyone involved. Jim used this time to eavesdrop on the dyads as they lounged on beanbag chairs and on the floor throughout Jim's and Jane's classrooms.

Content reading and writing. Literacy activities also found their way into content instruction. For example, in connection with social studies during Black History Month, Jim assembled a collection of biographical trade books, each featuring a prominent historical or contemporary African American person. The assignment required the children to select a book of interest, take it home and read the book to or with a parent or care giver (some of the titles were beyond the children's independent reading levels), and then collaboratively write a report and create some accompanying art. These reports and art pieces were assembled and later published in a class book titled "Famous African Americans." On this particular day, content literacy was first addressed as the students read and discussed a Weekly Reader magazine and then in connection with a kick-off of the new science unit on the solar system, for which Jim did brief book talks on the nonfiction trade books he had assembled for the unit. These books were then placed in the Featured Books display for students to read during science and independent reading periods.

Other literacy activities. Other activities were integral parts of the literacy curriculum. Reading/Writing Buddies occurred only once a week, but on other days the class had a 20–30 min, after-lunch Drop-Everything-and-Read (DEAR) time, during which children engaged in self-selected reading, either independently or collaboratively. Reading journals were a part of this period, and the children often wrote literary responses to the books they were reading. The Reading journals were dialogic, with Jim and sometimes the 5th-grade buddies corresponding with the second-graders. The Reader's/Writer's Chair was a time reserved several times a week for students to read aloud a book they had rehearsed or to share a recent written composition. The spelling program was thematically related to language arts skills (e.g., word lists involving contractions, or *sh* and *ch* words) or content (this week's list consisted of "Solar System" words). Whenever possible Spelling activities were linked to the Reading period strategy lessons or to Writing activities, and handwriting instruction was tied to preparing final drafts for published stories and reports. Literacy was also extended to the children's homes in several ways, one of the most popular being "Leo the Read-With-Me Lion" and "Molly the Read-With-Me Monkey." Leo and Molly, stuffed animals with a pocket for a picture book and a parent card describing shared reading techniques, accompanied different children home each day. Parents/care givers and children were also involved in literacy activities related to content work (e.g., the Black History Month social studies project), and encouragement and strategies for promoting reading at home were incorporated into notes that went home, sched-

uled conferences, and informal meetings with the children's parents and care givers.

In summary, the classroom literacy program provided the children multiple, daily exposures to reading, writing, and oral language within a literature-rich environment. Students listened to scores of picture and chapter books read aloud to them; they spent hundreds of hours reading and responding orally and in writing to books of choice; they had daily lessons in reading, writing, and literary strategies; and they interacted with peers, parents, and their teacher about reading, writing, and literature. Jim attempted to accomplish this by addressing multiple curricular and instructional balances between literature envisionment and strategy instruction. In spite of the prominence of teacher-initiated skill and strategy instruction within Jim's overall philosophy, he always strove to keep reading and responding to literature the primary focus. As in a previous study (Baumann, Hooten, & White, 1996), Jim used an 80/20 literature/instruction ratio as an informal rule-of-thumb; that is, 80% of the time spent reading, discussing, and responding to literature, with 20% of the time devoted to contextualized strategy instruction and application.

Accommodating Individual Differences

Although many of Jim's students struggled in reading at the beginning of the school year (the average class informal reading inventory level in August was a primer to beginning-Grade-1 level), the students' reading abilities ranged from nonreader to a Grade 3 level. Likewise, the children varied considerably in their writing abilities. Like others who have proposed ways to improve literacy instruction for all children in the regular classroom environment (e.g., Cunningham & Allington, 1994), Jim attempted to accommodate students at varying levels of proficiency in reading and writing in several ways.

First, as shown in Figure 2 and described previously, students participated in literacy activities in multiple settings and organizational structures, including the reading strategies period, a writing period, independent reading and response times, various read-aloud times, and peer tutoring events. This provided students of varied abilities opportunities to interact with texts and tasks that were appropriate for their differing levels. These structures also ensured that even the most struggling readers had experiences with whole texts and had the opportunity to engage in connected literacy experiences, activities often denied children experiencing difficulty learning to read (Allington, 1983; Hoffman et al., 1984).

Second, the grouping structure in the reading strategies period provided students differentiated instruction and experiences. The Red Group students (see Figure 2) used instructional texts at a beginning reading level, whereas the more skillful Yellow Group students used texts for instruction at a Grade 2 level. Although the types of instructional texts differed between groups, instruction was differentiated not in terms of quality (Allington, 1983) or pace (Allington, 1995; Barr, 1974) but in terms of the strategies students needed to make progress. For example, most students in the class needed opportunities to improve their oral reading fluency, but the Red Group students

needed more support for their oral reading. Therefore, Jim engaged in much more choral reading, shared reading, and echoic reading for Red Group students compared to Yellow Group students. Likewise, decoding instruction differed by group, with the Red Group receiving instruction and application in fundamental skills such as phonemic awareness, basic letter/sound correspondences, and simple orthographic patterns (e.g., CV, CVC, CVVC, CVCe), and the Yellow Group students learning about more complex orthographic patterns (e.g., decoding polysyllabic words).

Third, Jim provided individualization through one-to-one instruction and guidance in book selection. During the reading strategies period, Jim would listen to each individual child read at least every other day. Likewise, much of the work in writing was one-to-one through conferences with individual children. The writing period and reading journal response time provided students opportunities to engage in reflective, composition tasks suited to their unique interests and current skill levels in writing. The spelling program consisted of a basic corpus of Words for All each week, with students having the option of selecting some or all of the spelling Bonus Words. Book selection during free-reading times involved personalized conversations and discussion of books in terms of interest and appropriateness (Worthy, 1996), and Jim guided students in helping them find books neither too difficult nor too easy for independent reading (McGill-Franzen, 1993). He also circulated among the students during independent reading periods and when the 5th-grade Reading/Writing Buddies were working with the second graders so that he could listen in and provide impromptu instruction. Jim's adoption of the "easy books accessible and difficult books acceptable" perspective (Fielding & Roller, 1992) had him create structures that enabled students to find books readable to them and to have opportunities to stretch themselves with more challenging materials in supported ways (e.g., partner reading, reading/writing buddies, shared reading).

Sources of Data

Numerous sources of data were collected during the school year and triangulated to increase the trustworthiness of the study. First, both investigators kept personal journals to record their experiences and interactions as participant observers in the second-grade classroom. Second, each student was interviewed on videotape by Gay. Students were asked to respond to both specific questions about various components of literacy, such as reading strategies and favorite authors, and open-ended questions designed to give students the opportunity to share what they valued in themselves as readers and writers. During these interviews, students were also asked to read orally a self-selected book. By probing during the reading, Gay was also able to gather information about the reading processes and strategies used by each child, as well as individual preferences about reading. A third data source was a series of videotapes of regular classroom literacy activities, including whole class, small group, and individual interactions. A fourth source of data were artifacts of students' reading and writing collected over the entire school year, including responses to

literature, published class stories, individual writing and art work, informal notes, spelling samples and word study notebooks, and other student products. A fifth data source was a variety of assessments, including anecdotal records, grades and assignment checklists, progress reports, and an informal reading inventory (IRI) (Burns & Roe, 1993). The IRI was administered to each student three times across the school year (August, January, and May), using a different form at each administration. The graded word lists and one set of passages read orally were administered each time. Because a commercial IRI was used, it possessed both the advantages of having quasi-standardization in terms of readability, passage length, and question generation and the disadvantages of being independent of the materials the students used for instruction (Baumann, 1988, chap. 6). A sixth data source was Jim's daily plan book, which contained detailed lesson plans for each of the 180 school days. A final data source involved transcripts of interviews with parents and care givers of children in the class, fellow teachers at the school, and school administrators.

Data Analysis

Prior to data analysis, we constructed two sets of files, which constituted the case study data base (Yin, 1984) or case record (Patton, 1980). The first set included separate files for each of the 13 students, comprised of relevant data sources for individual children, including response journals, writing folders, informal notes, art work, informal reading inventories and other assessments, progress reports, word study notebooks, language experience stories, transcripts of individual interviews, and portions of Gay's journal in which specific children were mentioned. The second set of files included general data sources, such as Jim's daily plan book, Jim's personal journal, letters sent to parents, a still photo collection showing students and the classroom across the year, the research video library, and a collection of information on school- and district-wide policies and activities. During data analysis, we added additional files that included data reduction documents, data reconstruction documents, and process notes.

Data analysis proceeded in five phases. In Phase 1, we scheduled a series of conferences to study the data we had collected for each second-grader. During each session, we individually examined a student's case folder and jointly viewed the videotape of Gay's interview with that student. We also examined relevant information from the general data files. Next, we discussed in-depth the different kinds of knowledge about reading and writing demonstrated by each student, as evidenced by the various data sources. These meetings were audiotaped, and the recordings were converted to written form by Gay, who did this by reviewing the entire recording and writing in narrative form the significant points and descriptions about an individual students' literacy learning contained on the audiotape.

In Phase 2, we read each of these summaries, noting instances in which we had described students demonstrating both general and specific knowledge about reading and writing. We individually made lists of literacy learnings for each student and then shared our

lists with each other and discussed them. Jim then consolidated these individual lists into a comprehensive list of literacy learnings for each student.

Phase 3 of analysis involved looking across all the cases to find recurring patterns among the data. Gay and Jim individually created codes for the descriptors and examples of students' learning generated in Phase 2. Patterns of literacy learning were examined according to substance and frequency, and similar patterns were collapsed under common codes. Gay and Jim then compared the patterns they had generated independently and reached consensus on those they considered most pervasive. The patterns that emerged represented what students learned about reading and writing in second grade.

From these patterns, we induced and defined categories and properties. For example, one of our emerging patterns was students' enjoyment of and knowledge about books and stories. We labeled this category Engagement With Literacy. Within this category, we noticed that students acquired an appreciation for literature and respect for books. We also noticed that students demonstrated specific knowledge about books, authors, and illustrators, and that they expressed their opinions about books and literature orally and in writing. Because these three observations were salient features of this category, they became defining properties of the category. We followed this same procedure to induce other categories and their defining properties.

In order to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and to ensure a match between these categories and properties and the data, we engaged in a process of negative-case analysis (Kidder, 1981), which constituted Phase 4. In this analysis, we revisited each student's case folder and other data sources, including videotapes and Jim's journal and daily plan book, to study the fit between each category and property and the data. When categories and properties did not adequately explain specific cases, we refined them to account for this mismatch. For example, under the category Word Identification and Reading Fluency, we initially identified the property "Students developed automaticity in word recognition." During negative case analysis, we encountered a number of cases and instances for which this statement was not true. Although all students increased in automaticity of word recognition to certain degrees, not all students could be considered fully automatic. After careful reanalysis, we determined that a more appropriately stated property was "Students became more automatic in word recognition." We proceeded through each case in this manner until we could account for all negative cases. The result was a group of categories and properties that were comprehensive in the sense that all exceptions were eliminated.

In Phase 5, an audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was conducted to establish the dependability of our study. The auditor, a doctoral student in reading education and former elementary school teacher who was trained in qualitative research methodology, was provided access to four sets of files needed to assess trustworthiness (Schwandt & Halpern, 1988). These included (a) raw data files (e.g., students' response journals, videotapes of individual interviews with students, student assess-

ment documents), (b) data reduction files (e.g., audio tapes of meetings held during Phase 2 of the analysis, written summaries of data on each student developed after Phase 2), (c) data reconstruction files (e.g., notes on emerging patterns, categories, and properties resulting from Phase 3), and (d) process notes (e.g., a narrative explaining sampling, analysis, and other methodological components).

We provided the auditor with a set of 15 focus questions (Schwandt & Halpern, 1988) to guide her evaluation. These included questions to assess confirmability (e.g., "Can all findings be mapped to raw data and data reduction files?" "Do examples fairly represent the data?") and questions to assess dependability (e.g., "Is there an unbalanced reliance on one source of data?" "Is there evidence of triangulation?"). Using these guiding questions, the auditor examined the data on two individual children, all data reduction and reconstruction files, and process notes. The auditor's written report included responses to the audit focus questions. The auditor concluded that the study was trustworthy and dependable and that there was "clear evidence for all of the categories and claims made by the authors."

Results and Discussion

We structure our results by describing the breadth and depth of second-grade students' learning about reading, writing, and literature through a year-long program of strategy instruction within a literature-based reading environment. We report *breadth* of children's learning through a cross-case analysis, presenting five global categories generated from the data. Nested within each category are properties that articulate the qualities for each category. Robustness of these categories is documented by selecting varied data sources for multiple case-study children. We report the *depth* of children's learning by purposively selecting cases of two children and showing their year-long literacy development across the categories and properties. This presentation provides an explicit description of the literacy learning for individual children in the classroom. This presentation of data in broad and focused ways paints a detailed, multifaceted portrait of students' literacy learning in their second-grade year.

Breadth of Children's Literacy Learning: Cross-Case Analysis

Content analysis produced five superordinate categories, supported by two or three properties within each category. These emergent categories address the purpose of this investigation, which is to explore what diverse, second-grade students learned about reading, writing, and literature through a yearlong, integrated program of literature envisionment and skill and strategy instruction. Table 1 lists the categories and properties that are described in the following sections.

Category 1: Becoming a Reader

At the most broad level, the data indicated that the 13 participants became readers. Specifically, the children came to view reading as a natural, regular part of the school day, and

Table 1
Categories and Properties Generated Through Content Analysis

Category 1: Becoming a Reader
Property A: Students came to view reading as a natural, regular component of the school day.
Property B: Students grew in overall instructional reading level.
Category 2: Engagement With Literacy
Property A: Students acquired an appreciation for literature and respect for books.
Property B: Students developed knowledge of many books, authors, and illustrators.
Property C: Students had opinions about books and literature and expressed them freely in speech and writing.
Category 3: Word Identification and Reading Fluency
Property A: Students became more strategic in word identification.
Property B: Students became more automatic in word recognition.
Category 4: Comprehending Written Texts
Property A: Students understood and demonstrated that reading is a meaning-seeking process.
Property B: Students used multiple strategies for comprehending text and for clarifying ambiguous or unclear understandings of materials they read.
Category 5: Written Composition
Property A: Students developed a sense of audience in their writing.
Property B: Students wrote about personal interests and experiences.

they developed in overall reading ability across the year.

Property A: Students came to view reading as a natural, regular component of the school day. Part of Jim's philosophy was to immerse the children in print, books, and literature, and multiple data points documented that the children found reading activities intrinsic to the school day. For example, on April 27 Gay commented about how the students had become engrossed in books: "I noticed when Jim was trying to gather up everybody into the group [after the Private Read period] that the kids had a hard time closing their books. They wanted to keep reading, and that was really neat to witness." Gay suggested that the proliferation of literature partially explained the children's high involvement with books: "He [Jim] talks

about books and authors. It doesn't seem to be too much at all, even though he spends a good deal of time during the day discussing books. And the kids can't get enough of it." From his teacher perspective, Jim also noticed how the children had developed a voracious appetite for reading and children's literature. On April 18, he commented, "Yesterday I introduced Frank Asch as a new author. I've only read one title thus far . . . but kids have been reading the various Asch titles I set out. Reading up a storm." Jim went on to note how the children were copying the stories and playing with the illustrations and that "they get hooked on them [new authors and titles] and that's what I want—have them get hooked on books so they become readers."

Data on individual students supported the trend for children to seek out books throughout the day and find reading a comfortable, natural thing to do. Gay noted in her journal how well Wendy (pseudonyms are used for all children throughout this paper) read *Daniel's Dog* (Bogart, 1990) and that "when reading time was over, she was upset . . . that she didn't get to read the other two books that she had chosen." The children also talked about books and authors, as Gay described Kristen: "She knows a lot of authors' names. I've noticed in class time and time again that she talks about books. She can tell you plots of different books and who wrote them."

Not all children were always immersed in books, and some struggled to acquire the reading habit, as Jim commented about Jason: "Jason is inconsistent in his free-choice reading. He will sometimes really get into a book, but other times he will only look at the pictures. I am still waiting for him to get really hooked on books and literature." Nevertheless, most students indicated that they liked reading and were improving in ability, as Elizabeth related to Gay: "Well, at first, I didn't like reading, and now I'm getting more into it." Elizabeth added that she used the public library more and was reading chapter books because they were more interesting and challenging for her. Other students likewise noted that reading was natural and pleasurable. For example, Felicia commented to Gay, "I like all kinds of books . . . and I love to read," and Tiffany wrote in her journal on October 26, "I love books. I can read a book all day."

Jim also saw growth in struggling readers. On March 20, he noted Felicia's significant improvement in ability and interest in reading as evidenced by her performance that morning: "I can see good growth in her. She is just beginning to develop some independence, and her interest in books has jumped significantly over earlier in the year." Jim continued, "Whereas previously she would pick up books and pretend to be interested and sort of tell a story that went along with the picture, now she is actually reading and for the most part handling books."

Property B: Students grew in overall instructional reading level. IRI data provided evidence for students' growth in instructional reading level across the year. Jim administered an IRI (Burns & Roe, 1993) to all students the first week of school in August. Table 2 presents results for the 13 case study children on this and two subsequent IRI administrations using alternate forms. The August assessment indicated that, overall, the students came to Grade

Table 2
Students' Performance on Beginning-, Middle-, and End-of-Year Informal Reading Inventories

Student	August IRI	January IRI	May IRI	Growth[a]
Chantel	2	3.5	4	2
Elizabeth	3	4	5	2
Eric	2	3.5	4.5	2.5
Felicia	0	.3	1	1
Jason	.6	2	3	2.4
Jennifer	1.5	3	4.5	3
Kristen	1	3	4.5	3.5
Lafayette	.3	.6	2	1.7
Marcus	0	.6	2	2
Shawn	0	0	0	0
Terrence	0	0	0	0
Tiffany	.6	1	3	2.4
Wendy	1.5	4	5	3.5
Mean	.96	1.96	2.96	2
Median	.6	2	3	2

Note: 0 = below the Preprimer level; .3 = Preprimer level; .6 = Primer level
[a] Growth was determined by subtracting the August IRI level from the May IRI level.

2 reading at a level lower than what one might expect for a group of 7- and 8-year-olds. Specifically, students' IRI levels ranged from nonreader (i.e., an IRI level of below preprimer for Felicia, Marcus, Shawn, and Terrence) to above grade level (i.e., an IRI level of 3 for Elizabeth). The mean and median IRI levels (respectively) for the class in August were .96 and 0.6, indicating that, on average, students' reading performance was at the primer to beginning-Grade-1 level. Indeed, 7 of the 13 case study children were reading below a Grade 1 level, with only three students reading at a second-grade level or above.

IRI performance in January indicated growth in reading ability, with the class mean

and median IRI levels being 1.96 and 2.0, respectively, indicating that, on average, the children were reading at a beginning second-grade level at the midpoint of the school year. May IRI performance revealed still greater growth, with class mean and median IRI levels then being 2.96 and 3.0, respectively, documenting that the average class instructional reading level was at a beginning third-grade level. To estimate growth across the school year, the August IRI levels were subtracted from the May IRI levels (see difference scores in Growth column in Table 2). The mean and median Growth scores were 2.0 IRI levels across the entire class, with 11 of 13 students gaining an average of 2.36 IRI levels, and the 6 students demonstrating the most growth averaging an increase of 2.88 IRI levels.

Not all students demonstrated reading growth on the IRI. Shawn and Terrence still did not establish an IRI level in the May assessment and thus remained very beginning readers. Several other students (Felicia, Lafayette, Marcus), although increasing their reading ability 1 to 2 IRI levels across the school year, were still reading below a beginning-third-grade level in May, where one would hope students to be performing as they exit second grade. However, even for students who did not demonstrate measurable or significant growth according to IRI levels, there were both quantitative and qualitative indicators of reading development. For example, on the August IRI, Terrence could read only two words on the preprimer level word list (10%), whereas in May his score was 65% on an alternate-form preprimer word list. Similarly, in the fall Shawn made so many oral reading errors in the first paragraph of the preprimer level graded passage that Jim ceased administering it, whereas in the spring he read an alternate-form preprimer passage considerably better, with word identification and comprehension scores of 82% and 100% respectively. Therefore, even though neither Terrence nor Shawn's IRI performances in the spring met the criteria for instructional level at the preprimer level, they did demonstrate some growth in reading ability. Similar patterns of growth were also evident for other struggling readers such as Lafayette, Felicia, and Marcus.

Children making slow progress also demonstrated growth in qualitative ways. For example, on March 3, Jim commented in his journal how much Shawn was enjoying and how well he was reading the trade book *The Whales Go By* (Phleger, 1959): "He is really doing an excellent job reading that book . . . taking satisfaction in reading it, and all of that is encouraging." Jim noted that even though Shawn was not reading at grade level at this point, "We are talking about some major milestones here. I mean here is a child who could hardly read his name at the beginning of the year and now is picking up a good average middle-first-grade-difficulty-level book and reading it and enjoying it."

Parents also commented on the growth they saw in their children. During a summer home visit Jim made after the school year, Tiffany's mother stated that "I think she got real good at reading," commenting on how the instructional program "helped her get those big words that she wasn't getting before." Tiffany herself acknowledged growth. During the same home visit, Jim asked her, "What kind of reader are

you now?" to which Tiffany responded, "I'm a good reader." Jim probed by asking, "Why are you a good? What makes you good?" and Tiffany answered, "'Cause I practice." Cynthia, Tiffany's fifth-grade reading buddy who saw her develop as a reader, wrote in Tiffany's reading journal one day, "I read with Tiffany. She is a very nice person to read with. She is a very good reader and her reading is improving a lot."

Informal records reinforced the overall trend for children to grow in reading ability. In May Jim commented on Wendy's considerable progress, noting that she began the year "reading below a second-grade level" but indicating that in May "she leaves second grade as a Level 5 reader." Jim conveyed progress to parents, sharing in November with Lafayette's parents that "Lafayette is reading at a beginning Grade 1 level," but in January Jim wrote, "He has made good growth this quarter. I moved Lafayette to more challenging materials, and he is responding to the challenge well." In April Jim reported, "Lafayette still is reading somewhat below grade level, but he is making steady improvement," and in June reported that Lafayette was reading at a second-grade level, noting that "his growth in reading ability this year has been quite remarkable, and he should be complimented for his hard work and a good attitude."

In summary, the children in Jim's Room 8 became readers in second grade. Reading filled their days, and they grew in ability and interest. Wendy summed it up when she responded to Gay's probe, "Anything that makes you special as a reader?", with "I like to read a lot."

Category 2: Engagement With Literacy

The content analysis revealed that the envisionment perspective promoted children's engagement with books, literature, authors, and illustrators across the school day in multiple ways. Engagement was manifest through the children's growing appreciation for literature, knowledge of books and authors, and ability to respond to literature.

Property A: Students acquired an appreciation for literature and respect for books. To promote literary engagement, Jim introduced the children to many hundreds of books, which he noted frequently in his journal. In a September entry, he commented, "I am pleased with the volume of literature that the kids are exposed to." In November, he noted, "I am proud of my kids. They know authors and they know books." In April after reading aloud the chapter book *Class Clown* (Hurwitz, 1987), Jim reflected: "I don't know how many chapter books I've read to the kids this year—I'll have to tally them up—but it has been probably 20 or more. . . . Couple that with the number of picture books that I've read, which probably runs well over 100, and the kids have gotten lots of exposure to books."

Reading response journals were filled with comments about books the children enjoyed and appreciated, as Tiffany expressed: "Today I read *Clifford's Puppy Days* [Bridwell, 1989]. I love that book so much. Read that book and you will like it to. It is a good book and I love books." Children also wrote spontaneously about their values for reading. In a piece titled "I Like Books," Elizabeth wrote, "Well, if you like to read, here is a great book! The name of

it is *Green Eggs and Ham* [Seuss, 1960] . . . ." In a published class book titled "About Me Stories," several children commented on personal feelings about books and reading. Chantel wrote, "I love to read and write and tell jokes . . . I have a nice teacher, and he reads stories to us all the time." Jason stated that "I am good at reading," and Kristen commented, "I like it [school] a lot because we read a lot. We have easy books to read. Some are hard to read but I can read them even if they are hard." Elizabeth noted matter-of-factly, "I like my teacher. I like school. I like to read."

Appreciation for books and literature was demonstrated by the children's response to class read alouds, which Jim noted often in his journal: "I read the *Greyling* by Jane Yolen [1991] this morning, and the kids were spellbound by that book" [10/11]. "Finished *Taxi Cat and Huey* [LeRoy, 1992] today. . . . The kids were into it . . . really perked up at the end" [10/12]. "We had a nice time during our Class Meeting time. I was reading Mary Stolz's [1988] *Storm in the Night* illustrated by Pat Cummings and the kids really liked that" [5/12]. Students picked up read-aloud titles and read them themselves, as Eric expressed this in his journal: "Today I read *Arthur Goes to Camp* [Brown, 1982]. I like that book. Some time will you read that book again? Do you no wat? I relly like the book." In a March journal entry, Jim summed up his perception of the children's growing appreciation for literature, commenting on the morning's DEAR time: "The kids were wonderful. You know, it is like how I sort of dreamed it would be—everybody finding a comfortable spot, reading books, a few kids sharing quietly. . . ."

Property B: Students developed knowledge of many books, authors, and illustrators. The children demonstrated knowledge of books and authors in their journals. On November 11, Chantel commented on a number of Marc Brown books: "Today I read *Arthur's BABY* [Brown, 1987]. I [like] the books about Arthur. Some remind me of *Arthur Goes to Camp* [Brown, 1982] and *Arthur's Halloween* [Brown, 1983] and *Arthur's Eyes* [Brown, 1979] . . . ." Students linked books by the same author, as when Chantel wrote, "Today I read *Morris Goes to School* by B. Wiseman [1970]. . . . It is a good book," and then went on to tell about other Morris titles she had read and enjoyed. Children also demonstrated their growing book and author knowledge in class discussions. During a Class Meeting, Jim began to introduce a new featured author, Frank Asch, by doing a booktalk on *Mooncake* (1983), at which point Elizabeth took over: "Frank Asch . . . He's a neat author, and you're probably familiar with one of his famous books. It's called *Mooncake*. I bet some of you have seen this or heard this." Shawn extended Elizabeth's comment, noting "Oh, I got a book about the moon having a birthday" [*Happy Birthday, Moon*, Asch, 1982]. In April Gay commented on a book discussion: "Jim introduced a story by Pat Ross and asked if anyone in the group had read anything by Pat Ross. Quite a few of them had [mentioning books within the "M & M" series, e.g., Ross, 1980, 1981, 1985, 1993]." Similarly, on April 20 Jim commented in his journal, "We had some discussion of authors, and I'm fairly impressed with the kids' growing knowledge of books and authors and illustrators—knowledge

that they certainly didn't have at the beginning of the year."

When asked about books and authors, the students responded with considerable knowledge. One day Felicia talked about how she selected "cooking" books from the school library so that she and her grandmother could try out recipes. When Gay asked about other authors and illustrators, she mentioned Eric Carle and Dr. Seuss. When Felicia got stuck trying to think of one specific book title, she said, "It [book title] start with 'A'. . . Marc Brown, yeah, that's it," to which Gay asked, "Marc Brown? Who wrote what?" Felicia responded, "Marc Brown [1982, 1983, 1987] wrote *Arthur* [books]."

Property C: Students had opinions about books and literature and expressed them freely in speech and writing. The children became literature critics. They could name books that they liked and express why they liked them, as when Eric spontaneously wrote about the picture book *The Greyling* (Yolen, 1991) that Jim had read to the children earlier that day: "Dear Mr. B. The book that you read was good. I really like that book. I really do like it when she got the little baby. The baby was cute." Students also knew what they didn't like. For instance, Eric never got into books by Arnold Lobel, one of the Featured Authors. After reading *Mouse Soup* (Lobel, 1977), Eric expressed his dislike for it in his journal: "I do not like that book. Why? Because it is no good." After reading another Lobel title, *A Treeful of Pigs* (Lobel, 1979), Eric expressed that he was finished reading books by this author: "I did not like that book. He act liked a litle baby. I don't iven read [any more] Arnold Lobel storys."

The children's demonstrated literary tastes through their requests for read alouds. On September 20, Jim read aloud *Bright Eyes, Brown Skin* (Hudson & Ford, 1990), requested by Felicia, and *The Book of Black Heroes From A to Z* (Hudson & Wesley, 1988), recommended by Elizabeth. It became an informal tradition for the children to place requested read-aloud books unobtrusively on the Reader's/Writer's Chair, from which Jim read books during the Class Meeting time. Students also observed and were influenced by what their classmates were reading. One day Shawn shared with Gay about how he became familiar with *Ten Silly Bears* (Mead, 1993), one of his favorite books: "My friend named Eric. He found it, and he read it, and I read it. . . . I just saw Eric reading it. . . . We were buddy reading." Students also demonstrated genre preferences. Jason stuck with nonfiction all year. He read *Dancing With Manatees* (McNulty, 1994) many times, and he illustrated and wrote about a favorite shark book in his journal. Jason's year-long fascination with insects led him to the library to check out books on spiders and ladybugs, and he composed elaborate published stories titled "Insects" and "My Caterpillar." Even students who struggled with reading had preferences for authors and books. Terrence read and reread comfortable favorites such as *Go Dog, Go* (Eastman 1961), *More Spaghetti, I Say* (Gelman, 1993), and *Green Eggs and Ham* (Seuss, 1960), and he was especially proud of a composition titled "Danny and the Zebra," a take-

off of *Danny and the Dinosaur* (Hoff, 1958), a book he read all year long.

Category 3: Word Identification and Reading Fluency

Students' engagement with literature was paralleled by their growth in ability to pronounce words and read fluently, as evidenced through two properties.

Property A: Students became more strategic in word identification. The second-graders demonstrated and explained strategies they used to figure out unfamiliar words, including phonic analysis, context clues, sight word knowledge, and comprehension monitoring. The improvement made by students is documented by comparing data collected at the beginning and end of the school year. Early in the school year, Jim expressed concern about the most struggling readers' word-reading skills: "These kids just absolutely lack the fundamentals of phonics [and] decoding, so hopefully, through some direct instruction on that, I can really begin to move these kids along in literacy" [9/12]. For example, on the beginning-of-the-year IRI, Felicia was able to pronounce only 40% of the words on the preprimer word list, and she did not consistently attend to beginning elements in words (for example, she said *this* for *good* and *book* for *look*). Felicia grew in skills, however, as Jim noted on December 12: "Felicia . . . is able to look at words and realize there is a strategy other than hunting for an idea among the pictures or hoping that it is a sight word . . . she is attending to text and realizing that there are clues in the words themselves." Several weeks later Jim noted, "Felicia . . . is beginning to decode words. At least the words she is trying to say have initial consonant similarities [1/26]." In April Gay noted how Felicia spontaneously pointed out how *ph* said /f/ while reading the title of the big book *Humphrey* (Arnold, 1992). On the May IRI she scored 80% accuracy on the first-grade word list and attended to initial consonants even in words she could not completely decode (e.g., *goal* for *give*, *jump* for *just*, *our* for *out*).

Similarly, Shawn, who could not read even the preprimer passage on the August IRI, demonstrated growth in decoding as the year progressed. In December Jim wrote, "I noticed yesterday that he [Shawn] was reading much more skillfully. He was actually decoding words and focusing on words, something that I haven't seen much from him before." While reading a predictable rhyming book to Gay in May, Shawn stopped at the word *boat*, but he identified it immediately when Gay prompted him to look at the first letter. When he read on and then hesitated at the word *coat*, Gay asked, "Look, Shawn, do these words look alike [pointing to *boat* and *coat*]? What's different?" Shawn replied, "Just the *c*," which enabled him to decode *coat*.

At the beginning of the year, Jim also was concerned about the word identification abilities of the more skillful readers (e.g., Chantel, Elizabeth, Eric): "Those kids also need work in word identification. They are more capable readers, but they are hardly home free [9/12]." These children also became more strategic. For example, on the August IRI, Elizabeth was unable to decode some moderately simple words on the word lists (e.g., *change*, *draw*),

but at the end of the year, she decoded more difficult words on the word lists (e.g., *disturbance, prairie, cartridge*). During a May interview, Gay asked Elizabeth how she knew the word *calico* in a book she had just read orally. Elizabeth's response of "sounded it out . . . sounded it out as I was reading" suggested the use of decoding and context in word identification. Similarly, Eric shared with Gay a context-based strategy he used when he encountered an unfamiliar word: "I'll skip that word, and then when I get to the last word, I'll know what that word means." These examples of both struggling and more successful readers demonstrate the children's resourcefulness. Although students were not always strategic, and there was a wide range of competency among students in terms of strategy use, the data indicate that, overall, the children were on their way toward independence in word identification.

Property B: Students became more automatic in word recognition. As students grew in sight vocabulary, knowledge of phonic generalizations, confidence, and risk-taking ability, they become more automatic. For example, at the beginning of the year, Tiffany recognized only simple, one-syllable words. By the end of the year, however, she could identify all the words on the third-grade IRI word list, including many multisyllabic words. Jim noted Tiffany's progress in a written comment after administering the spring IRI: "She has moved from being a very tentative, reluctant reader to a confident, fairly fluent one." Similarly, Eric and Chantel at the end of the year were able to pronounce most words on the Grade 3 list with one attempt per word. At mid-year, Wendy accurately read only 45% of the words on the Grade 4 list and failed to attempt many of them, but at year's end, she read 80% of the Grade 4 words accurately with one attempt for each word. These data indicate that students' word recognition for even difficult words was becoming automatic. Students also became more automatic in reading connected text. In August Kristen read with 91% accuracy on the Grade 1 IRI passage and became frustrated on the Grade 2 passage. In contrast, in May she was able to read the Grade 4 passage smoothly with 97% accuracy. When Gay asked Eric about the books he chose to read, he indicated that fluent reading was important for him, stating that "I can read them very fast."

Jason also became more automatic, but his growth was often masked by his tendency to be impulsive in his oral reading, as Jim noted: "Jason still needs to read with greater care and precision. He tends to miscall words that, when his attention is called to them, he can read quite well." Jason was cognizant of this tendency. In May while reading *Green Eggs and Ham* (Seuss, 1960), Jason misread the end of a sentence and reread it to correct his mistake, which prompted Gay to ask: "What made you go back and decide to change the word there?" Jason replied, "'Cause I got one of the words wrong." Gay asked how he knew it was wrong, and Jason said, "'Cause I was going too fast." This metacognitive awareness likely contributed to Jason's growth in automaticity. Whereas in August he read with only 86% accuracy on the Grade 1 IRI passage, in May he read fairly effortlessly (95% accuracy) on the Grade 3 passage. Videotapes of literacy activities in the classroom near the end of the

school year confirmed the growth in automaticity demonstrated by Jason and others. Numerous clips show students reading words automatically and entire texts fluently. With few exceptions, students were beginning to integrate their knowledge and strategies to read more quickly, smoothly, accurately, and with enjoyment.

Category 4: Comprehending Written Texts

Students learned not only to read and pronounce words but also that the ultimate purpose of reading is to acquire meaning, as articulated in two properties.

Property A: Students understood and demonstrated that reading is a meaning-seeking process. Students read because books gave them information and provided them emotional interactions, as evidenced by Tiffany's journal response: "Today I read *The Gorilla Did It* [Hazen, 1976]. I like that so much. It is funny when the boy say that the gorilla did it. Read that book, it is a good book." Text comprehension was a critical literacy goal, and Jim taught and had the kids practice meaning-seeking strategies, as noted by Gay on April 20 when Jim introduced a new trade book to the Yellow group: "They previewed *Mouse Soup* [Lobel, 1977] by looking through the book. Jim asked if anybody had an idea where the title came from by looking at the pictures. They discussed the structure of the book, the fact that the first part of the book was an introduction. They also did a little vocabulary lesson [about the meaning of *weasel*]."

Students responded to the classroom literary environment in ways that demonstrated that they viewed reading as understanding and responding to an author's message. In the same April 20 lesson, Gay noted: "All of the students were immediately engaged in the reading [*Mouse Soup*], quite enthusiastically." Gay also noted how the children's desire to get into a story drove their behavior: "Jason came up to Jim during the reading. He had sort of peeked ahead [Jim had assigned the first chapter] and was anxious to tell Jim what was happening later in the book. Many of the kids, although they were supposed to read the first chapter, kept reading until they had practically reached the end of the book. And of course Jim didn't stop them."

Students' self-corrections during oral reading provided another index of their growth in reading for meaning. In August Kristen read the IRI text, *Grandma showed me flowers hanging in her window*. She had many kinds of flowers as *Grandma showed me flowers hafing on the world. She had made kids of flower*. In contrast, at the end of second grade, Kristen initially read the IRI sentence *He made fine leather belts, shoes, and bags to sell in his shop* as *He made fine leather belts, shoes, and bags to sell in his top*, but then she self-corrected *shop* for *top*. Similarly, after reading the phrase *swept up bits of leather* as *swept up bites of leather*, Kristen self-corrected *bits* for *bites*. Kristen's comprehension on the May IRI passages (e.g., 100% comprehension on the Grade 4 passage) exceeded her comprehension earlier in the year (e.g., 70% comprehension on the Grade 3 passage in January).

Students also provided subtle clues about their quest to make sense of written text. While Elizabeth was reading *Noisy Nora* (Wells,

1973) one day, Gay inquired, "You sort of stopped there [pointing to a section of the book]. What was going on in your mind? You hesitated." Elizabeth replied: "Sometimes I look at the pictures and kind of forget about reading. Then I start reading again. Sometimes I stop to just look at the pictures for a while." As Gay and Elizabeth continued talking about her reading, it became clear that Elizabeth was not only enjoying the illustrations but really studying them in conjunction with the text to interpret the story and make full sense of it. In other words, her pauses were deliberate, metacognitive strategies for understanding and enjoying an engaging trade book.

Property B: Students used multiple strategies for comprehending text and for clarifying ambiguous or unclear understandings of materials they read. Students demonstrated growth in comprehension strategies as they tried to puzzle out texts. While reading with Felicia, Gay asked her why she self-corrected a word, and Felicia responded, "Because I knew it didn't make sense, and I went back and said it again." Eric described a similar meaning-seeking strategy for dealing with an unfamiliar word, saying "I go back and read it over, and I know what the word is." Students also demonstrated comprehension strategies through their writing. After reading part of *Mouse Soup* (Lobel, 1977), Tiffany used her journal to predict what would happen the story: "I think the weasel is going to like it [mouse soup]." Chantel revealed through her journal the inferences she made while reading *Arthur Babysits* [Brown, 1992], speculating about the ages of Timmy and Tommy, the "bad boys" in the story: "I think there about three years old."

Children wrote unprompted summaries in their journals. After reading *Noisy Breakfast* (Blonder, 1994), Tiffany wrote, "A dog is in the sotry and a mouse is in the story and the dog listen to the CRACK and the mouse fall in the story." In April Elizabeth wrote a more elaborate summary: "Today I read *The [very] busy spider* [Carle, 1984]. Animals come up to the spider and ask qoustouns but she dosn't answer becouse she is too busy to answer and when She is done she cought a fly in her web just like that! the end sighed Erick Carl!" Gay commented on how Lafayette used prior knowledge as he and several students were recounting a Frog and Toad selection (Lobel, 1972): "It was interesting to listen to Lafayette's talk about what happened in the story because he seemed to be using his schema to sort of fill in gaps in his memory. He gave details . . . that weren't really in the story, and that was kind of neat thinking [4/25]."

Category 5: Written Composition

Just as students learned to read purposefully, they also learned to write meaningfully. Students' writing grew in volume and fluency across the year as they developed ability to write for specific audiences and compose selections based upon their interests and experiences.

Property A: Students developed a sense of audience in their writing. At the beginning of the school year, students' writing did not demonstrate a sense of audience, often consisting of lists of items, as when Tiffany wrote, "I like colos and my frivebt colos si orange and pink and red and green and brown and purple

and blue and yellow and white and black." Another format evident early in the year was repetition, as in Felicia's story: "I love my brother. I love my mom. I love my sister. I love my father. I like my house." However, as the year progressed, most students came to realize that writing was a way to communicate with others. Students began to use writing to ask questions, to share their opinions, and to send messages. For example Tiffany included a conversational tone in her published story "Kind People":

> Do you obey your mom and dad? I do. You play by the rules. Do you be good? I do like when your mom was gone. You have to be good. Do you be kind to your sister and brother? Do you play right with your sister and brother? I like to play basketball with my sister and my brother and my mom and dad.

In her story about Christmas, Chantel began with a general narrative: "I like Chistmas because you get presents. Santa Claus will not give you presents if you are bad. . . . Santa Claus is a fat man but he is sweet because he gives presents to you. . . ." But later in her story, Chantel began directing her comments specifically to Santa Claus: "I believe in you Santa Claus. it is almost Christmas. You do a good job deliveryi Toys to girls and Boys. That is hard work Santa Claus But no matter what you do you are sweet and good."

Students demonstrated a growing sense of audience as they wrote to one another and Jim through the use of a Message Board and their journals. For example, Wendy wrote in her journal: "Today I read *Nate the Great and the Fishy Prize* [Sharmat, 1988]. It was a good book. I like it a lot. It was a funny story. I would like you to read it to the class after you read *Ramona the Brave* [Cleary, 1975]. I love you, Mr. B. Please." Chantel used her reading journal to correspond with her fifth-grade reading buddy, who in turn wrote a note to Jim: "Chantel is a very good reader. She is a very nice girl and pretty. She never get off of track. And she can spell very very good." Jim found notes children left on his desk or the Message Board. Felicia wrote often, and in the following example, she not only asked Jim a question but also answered it: "Happy Birthday Mr. B. I Love You Mr. B. do you Like me Yes I do Like Felicia."

Property B: Students wrote about personal interests and experiences. Students' writing at the beginning of the school year offered little insight into the many unique and special personalities that existed in the classroom. For example, Eric wrote, "Our class like to play and read. We like to play games to. And we like to go to play with our fiand somethims," and Elizabeth wrote, "I like cars. I like red cars. Some cars are pritey. I like blue cars. Cars are fun." As time went on, however, the children realized that they could use writing to reveal things important or interesting to them, as when Eric began his Christmas story with "I like Blitzen because he is faster than the other reindeer and he can fly good." In a more elaborate piece entitled "Football," Eric wrote proudly, yet somewhat mischievously, about his older brother: "My brother plays football. Me and my dad go and see him play. . . . And when the game is over guess what he would do? He will go and see if his girl friend is at the game. They always kiss." Elizabeth also grew in ability to express ideas in writing. At the beginning of the school year, Jim reported

to her parents, "She is somewhat reluctant to write during our writing period." At mid-year, however, he commented, "She is more willing to participate during writing class," as exemplified by Elizabeth's personal experience narrative titled "Swimming is Great," within which she embedded a poetic verse:

> I like swimming, but i don't lik to be called mashin [Martian] at all. I hate the word. Why? Becouse thay tink I look like a marshan but I don't. Lucky i got a hair cut. PS a song about swimming. I love to swim it is great instead of felling cold and sad we shuold celabrat. Let's be friends. Isi't it great. Yeh! PS SWIMMING IS GREAT!

Students developed themes in their writing. Jason's interest in animals was evident in one of his first compositions called "About Me" in which he wrote, "I'm good at hatching bugs." Later he wrote, "My mom tod me that we couldn't kep the snake. the snake slid into the grass." Jason's animal stories gradually became more elaborate as shown in an informational piece of writing: "Insects are bugs. Some insects don't eat ants. Some do eat ants. Some bugs eat different insects like spiders eat butterflies. Some insects like gold fish and the bugs do eat different insects." Jason showed versatility as in his lyrical piece "The Caterpillar": "My dad said that we could keep the caterpillar. The caterpillar spin and spin until the caterpillar turned into a cocoon. I saw a wing come out of the cocoon. It flew away up into the sky. Up in the high sky."

Kristen, also interested in animals, at the beginning of the year wrote, "Do not kill animals. What do they do to you?" At mid-year she wrote personal and fantasy stories about horses, ducks, and the following story about a pet goose: "I had a goose. That goose changed from good to evil. That goose ate all the chick's and hen's food. That goose woke me up when I was sleeping. . . ." Near the end of the year, she wrote a free verse poem that started out descriptive but ended quite metaphorical: "Horses are nice./Cats are soft./Dogs are good./Bobcats are big./Chicks are cute./Hens are feathery./Mice are small./Sheep are wool./Tigers are stripes./Lions are main cats. . . ." The inventiveness, humor, and genuineness that characterized children's written products reflected their individual personalities. Regardless of reading ability, children took ownership of their writing and found ways to make it more interesting and creative.

Depth of Children's Literacy Learning: Within-Case Analysis

In this section, we describe the literacy learnings of two children, Marcus and Jennifer. Our intent is to portray the multiple dimensions of the second-grade students' development of literary envisionment and reading and language art strategies across the school year. We selected Marcus and Jennifer because they represent, respectively, two groups of students in Jim's class: children who struggled with literacy, and children who developed literacy with greater ease.

Marcus: A Struggling but Successful Literacy-Learner

Marcus began second grade full of energy and eagerness, but the road to literacy for him

had prospects of being long and hard. Marcus's first-grade teacher reported that he had problems reading, and Jim could not establish an instructional reading level for Marcus on the August IRI, as he was clearly frustrated on the preprimer passage. Marcus attended to beginning consonants in most words, but he had not yet learned to focus on the middle and end of words (e.g., he read *dude* for *down*, *house* for *here*, *little* for *look*). Early in the year, Jim noted that Marcus tended to become distracted from instructional activities, exacerbating his reading problems.

But Marcus tried hard and quickly began to show signs of progress. At mid-year, Jim wrote: "I have seen good growth in Marcus's reading performance. . . . He is much more willing to study words, and he is showing greater skill at applying decoding strategies." On the January IRI, Marcus demonstrated an increased sight vocabulary and growth in phonic analysis, focusing on both the beginning and ending of words (e.g., he read *come* for *came*, *friend* for *find*, *run* for *ran*). Marcus's improvement was not limited to word identification skills, as Jim noted in January: "He's metacognitively aware as he reads, and his comprehension is quite good." By the end of the school year, Marcus demonstrated significant progress in overall reading ability. On the May IRI, he was able to read the Grade 2 passage fairly accurately and fluently, with his reading of *waterbed* for *wastebasket* indicative of his attention to entire words.

Marcus learned to articulate the strategies he used to figure out unfamiliar words, as in May when Gay asked, "What do you do when you come across a word you're not sure about?" Marcus replied, "Sound it out or come back to it." Gay probed, "Come back to it?", and Marcus clarified, "No, skip over it and come back to it." Marcus elaborated by explaining how he decoded the word *sneeze*, using his knowledge of "sn," "long e," and "z" sounds and then blending them together. Marcus learned to integrate multiple strategies in his reading. While reading a Frog and Toad book (Lobel, 1970) to Gay one spring day, Marcus read the text *Frog swam first and made a big splash. Toad swam second* and immediately asked Gay "[Is] that right?" The word Marcus should have read instead of *second* was *slowly*. He made a reasonable substitution for *slowly* based on clues from the previous sentence and the first letter of the word, but he knew it was not correct. When Gay asked, "Why do you think it's not *second*?", Marcus replied, "It don't got a *k*." Marcus's ability in this instance to simultaneously use context, word knowledge, and metacognitive awareness provides evidence of strategic reading growth.

With increasing skill, Marcus demonstrated greater will to read for pleasure. In winter Jim commented, "Marcus is now able to select a number of books that he can read on his own, and I have seen him choose to read more when he completes other work." Marcus expressed that knowing the words made reading fun. When Gay asked, "What makes a book just right?", he responded, "It got the right words in it for you. . . . It got all the words you know." In April Gay commented on Marcus's attitude toward books: "He always enjoys the books no matter what he is reading, whether it's a trade book or the basal and even if it is a very familiar book that he's read time and time

again." Gay noticed Marcus's improving attitude. As they read *George and Martha* (Marshall, 1972) together, she commented: "He really got into this book. He struggled a little bit with the words, but his interest in the book and in just about anything he attempts to read is so high that he doesn't get frustrated with it."

Marcus became knowledgeable about books and authors and genuinely interested in them, as when he commented to Gay about familiar books noticed in another classroom: "Hey, they got *Make Way for Ducklings* [McCloskey, 1941] and *The Three Bears* [Galdone, 1985]." Marcus had favorite authors, such as James Marshall: "He write good books. My favorite one I read [is] *Miss Nelson is Missing* [Allard, 1977; Marshall is illustrator]." When Gay informed Marcus of the sequel, *Miss Nelson is Back* [Allard, 1982], Marcus inquired, "You got it? When you get hold of it, can I read it?" Marcus was also willing to share his reaction to stories. Before rereading "The Swim," a familiar story from a Frog and Toad book (Lobel, 1970), he said, "I like 'The Swim'. . . I'll be laughing. I'll be laughing at him [Toad]. He gonna be in a bathing suit." Marcus also wrote about books he liked: "Today I read *Morris Has a Cold* [Wiseman, 1978]. It was a good book to read. I like when Boris don't ever get sick again!"

At year's end, Marcus was still a struggling reader, but he was a successful literacy-learner. In January Jim saw a bright future for Marcus: "Marcus is an amazing person. He has difficulty attending, but when he finally does, he can get into things and do a good job." In April, Jim wrote "Marcus has shown excellent improvement in reading," reflecting that "Marcus was a virtual nonreader at the beginning of Grade 2." At the end of the school year, Jim commented, "If he continues to practice reading at school and home and focuses on instruction, I believe he can develop into a fine reader." In June Jim noted that "Marcus seems aware of his fine progress, and he is justifiably proud of his growth." Perhaps the most compelling evidence of Marcus's positive self-efficacy was his simple reply when Gay asked him what was special about him as a reader: "I'm good at reading."

Jennifer. From Beginner to Fluent Literacy-Learner

Jennifer entered second grade an excited, enthusiastic, hopeful youngster, just like the other children in Jim's class. According to her first-grade teacher, "Jennifer made much progress in first grade," although her teacher assessed her as a "low" reader. In early September, Jim noted that Jennifer had difficulty getting into academic tasks, so he set "concentration and greater responsibility for her work" as learning objectives for her. The August IRI placed Jennifer's instructional reading level at middle Grade 1. Jennifer generally attended to beginning and ending consonants, but she was unsure of vowels pronunciations (e.g., she read *get* for *got*, *work* for *walk*, *holding* for *hanging*). Likewise Jennifer's inventive spelling initially emphasized consonant correspondences (e.g., she wrote *I like my bruthe bekus he play a lit*. I rel men it for the conventionally spelled *I like my brother because he play a lot*. I really mean it). Jennifer understood that reading

involved seeking meaning, her listening comprehension was very strong, and she had an impressive expressive oral vocabulary. Jennifer, however, did not initially seek out books to read when her work was completed or when she had free time, and her responses to literature indicated enjoyment but not much elaboration. For example, she wrote on September 22, "Today I read *Henry and MUDGE* [Rylant, 1987] I Like The Book it's fun to read I Like the stre [story]." In short, Jennifer entered first grade with wonderful potential to grow and learn, which Jim acknowledged on October 4 by writing, "Jennifer is a bright, articulate student for whom I have great expectations."

Jennifer's mother was concerned about her daughter's growth in reading and writing, often visiting with Jim before or after school and supporting the various school-home initiatives Jim implemented. Dividends for their coordinated efforts became obvious. In early November, Jim noted that Jennifer and several other students were progressing "at a lickety-clip pace" and thus committed to "stretching and challenging them even more." In late November, Jim commented, "I have seen some maturity in Jennifer . . . she's been doing a nice job on her work recently." Jennifer's growth was very apparent on the January IRI, at which time Jim summarized her performance as follows: "Good progress since August. Jennifer's a good, strong third-grade reader now. She's deliberate in word ID, and her comprehension is very good." Jim attributed her growth to practice: "She's one who will regularly pick up books to read and does a super job during DEAR time."

Jennifer grew in sophistication in word identification strategies. On the January IRI, she successfully decoded words such as *government* and *jealous*, and her attempts at words such as *amused* (*am'/used*) and *lizard* (*li/zard* with a long i) revealed increasing sophistication in decoding polysyllabic words. Jennifer was able to apply and articulate the word identification instruction she was receiving. For example, when asked why she read *take* as *tack* but then self-corrected, Jennifer replied, "Because it has an 'e' at the end," signaling her knowledge of the CVCe generalization. Jennifer's comprehension was developing commensurate with her word reading ability, as Jim wrote "excellent comprehension on this story" on the Level-3 IRI protocol sheet in January. Jennifer developed interest in reading along with her skill, perhaps not coincidentally. In April Jim commented, "Jennifer is reading above grade level, with very good comprehension and a nicely developing reading vocabulary." He described her as "an avid reader" and commented that "it is a great pleasure to see a student like Jennifer develop the love of reading as she has."

Jennifer's literary responses deepened, writing in her journal in winter: "Today I read a Book cod [called] *What Mary Jo Shared* [Udry, 1966]. I lik that book it is fun but ther is a Little bit of sad part in it the sad part is wean [when] the teacher askst her do you have Something to shar and she would sak [shake] her head . . ." Jennifer's reading journal entries became interactive and revealed her ability to identify favorite books. For instance, after reading *Monkey See, Monkey Do* (Oxenbury, 1982), Jennifer wrote, "You will love

this story if you get a good time to read it. I like that story. Do you?", to which Jim wrote back, "I don't think I've read this book, Jennifer, but I'll have to check it out! Mr. B."

Video footage also supported the growth we saw in Jennifer's interest and enjoyment in reading. Gay noted how one day Jennifer "got up in front of the camera and started reading her book to me. . . . She looked right into the camera; she was not self conscious at all. . . . She even read the dedication page." We also have video clips in which Jennifer rocked contentedly in the Reader's/Writer's Chair while reading *Miss Nelson is Missing* (Allard, 1977) and buddy-read the picture book *Chicken Sunday* (Polacco, 1992) with her 5th-grade partner.

Jennifer demonstrated increased metacognitive awareness, as when she described for Gay what made *Thy Friend Obadiah* (Turkle, 1969) a "hard" book to read: "It had a lot of hard words in it, and it's real long." When Gay inquired if Jennifer was going to finish the book, she replied, "I'm trying. It was hard for me to finish it at first because we had a short period." Jennifer described her persistence and how she would "go back to the place I left off, and I start reading there until the period goes away. It might take me two days or so." Jennifer's comments suggest that she understood that some books were more challenging than others, but she was unafraid to take the risk to try to read them. She also understood that reading hard books required persistence and a set of strategies different from those needed to read less challenging books.

On the May IRI, Jennifer successfully decoded words such as *assembly*, *captive*, *nervous*, *relief*, and *tiresome* and demonstrated full comprehension (100% of the questions answered correctly) through the fourth-grade-level passage with an estimated instructional reading level of middle fourth grade. Jim's anecdotal comments following his analysis of the May IRI data captured the growth Jennifer experienced during second grade: "Outstanding progress across the entire school year." In addition to her obvious increase in skill, Jim wrote, "She also has *become* a reader, that is, choosing to read books on her own and clearly understanding and enjoying them." Jim attributed her success to "very nice support at home . . . so credit for her achievements should be shared with her parents."

In sum, Jennifer came to second grade a beginning reader who possessed the capacity to develop in reading and writing competence. Jennifer left second a much more strategic, fluent reader and writer. She prospered in the instructional environment that included immersion, practice, and instruction in literate activities, providing her the keys for unlocking her significant potential for learning. Jim summed it up by saying, "The sky's the limit for Jennifer."

General Discussion

In this section, we begin by addressing the limitations of our study. Next, we summarize our findings and interpret them in relation to the curriculum and instructional balance theoretical frame used to ground this investigation. Finally, we relate our findings to the broader literature.

Limitations

We acknowledge several limitations of our investigation. First, the power of our research—the rich, detailed description of a *specific* learning environment—is simultaneously its major limit. Our learnings are restricted to a localized milieu: Jim's second-grade classroom at Fowler Drive Elementary School in Athens, Georgia. The special conditions of this classroom (e.g., small class size), school (e.g., supportive parents and administrators, rich cultural diversity), and Jim's teaching situation (e.g., modest support for materials through the NRRC, support from colleagues within the School Research Consortium and at the university) no doubt influenced the nature of and effects of Jim's second-grade literacy program. Therefore, we cannot nor do not claim that the intricacies of students' learnings we influenced, observed, and described within Jim's literature/strategy-based instructional program would be evident in other teachers' classrooms locally or beyond.

Second, our research was guided and influenced by our beliefs as educators, researchers, and teachers. The fact that Jim was both teacher and researcher provided him a unique vantage point as well as special responsibilities and challenges as a social scientist (Baumann, 1996). In spite of adherence to established qualitative methods, including procedures such as triangulation and auditing, Jim's desire as a teacher to have his children grow, learn, and achieve must be acknowledged as a potential confounding factor in data presentation and analysis. In a sense, every qualitative inquiry that includes significant participant involvement, as ours did, becomes a form of self-fulfilling prophecy: researchers interpreting the world from the perspectives they hold (Alvermann et al., 1996). We neither deny nor offer apologies for this reality. Therefore, as in any inquiry—qualitative, quantitative, or other—we leave it to the research consumer to assess the dependability, credibility, and utility of our data and interpretations.

Our Results Vis-à-Vis Curricular and Instructional Balances

The purpose of this study was to explore what diverse, second-graders learned about reading, writing, and literature through a year-long, integrated program of literature envisionment and skill and strategy instruction. Our analysis of 13 children revealed five major findings:

- Students developed into readers, as evidenced by their overall growth in reading ability and their demonstrated use of reading as a natural, regular component of the school day.
- The children became engaged with literacy, which was demonstrated through their increasing appreciation for literature; respect for books, knowledge of books, authors, and illustrators; and ability to respond to literature orally and in writing.
- Students grew in word identification ability and reading fluency, which was manifest through their application of multiple word reading strategies and increased automaticity.
- The children became better at comprehending what they read, which they dem-

onstrated in an overall awareness that reading involves meaning acquisition and through the multiple strategies they employed to understand written texts.

- Students grew in written composition proficiency, as shown through their heightened sense of audience and ability to convey personal interests and experiences.

To ground our study, we used the notion of a teacher's goal of striving for delicate balances between and among curricular and instructional issues (see Figure 1). In particular, we proposed that Jim's classroom program involved an attempt to achieve a curricular balance between creating a literature envisionment environment while providing students skill and strategy instruction through literary texts and experiences. We also suggested that Jim worked to balance different forms of instruction: preplanned, teacher-initiated instruction and instructional structures responsive to students' needs and interests.

In reflecting on the data presented and the children's learnings about reading, writing, and literature across the school year, we see the curricular and instructional balance framework actualized in the literacy program in Room 8. In Table 3, the four cells from Figure 1 are elaborated through examples of learning activities in Jim's classroom program. Specifically, the curricular element of literature envisionment was realized through both teacher-initiated activities (e.g., Jim specifying a writing topic) and through responsive instructional actions (e.g., children choosing their own writing topics). The contextualized skill/strategy instruction element likewise was balanced, as when Jim taught planned, explicit, teacher-initiated skill lessons (e.g., Jim teaching the CVCe generalization to a group of children), in contrast to unplanned, situation-specific, informal responsive instruction (e.g., Jim masking word parts to help a child pronounce unfamiliar words during Private Read time). Although the boundaries between cells in the conceptual frame are not absolutely discrete (classroom features may exist on continua rather than in separate categories), we believe that the curriculum/instruction balance framework aptly captures the data and results presented in this study and provides a useful way to conceptualize the teaching and learning activities within Jim's classroom.

Our Results Vis-à-Vis the Research and Theoretical Literature

How do our findings compare to the extant research and theory on literature-based reading and writing instructional programs? We see four ways in which our data affirm or challenge the research and conventional wisdom. First, our inquiry supports the positive impacts of a literature-based program on children's knowledge and appreciation of and response to literature. We found, like others (e.g., Fraser & Skolnick, 1994; Hancock & Hill, 1988; McGee, 1992; Routman, 1988, 1991; Short, 1995; Walmsley, 1992), that students become very knowledgeable and highly engaged with literature when they were immersed in literature. Thus, the envisionment in our study corroborates Morrow's (1992) finding of the positive impact of a literature-based program

Table 3
Balances Between and Within Literature and Literacy Strategy Instruction

Curriculum Balance	Instructional Balance (examples for each category)	
	Teacher Initiated Instruction	**Instruction Responsive to Students**
	* Teacher selects materials for "Private Read" portion of Reading period	* Students select materials for DEAR time, Buddy Reading, or Readers'/Writers' Chair
Literature Envisionment	* Teacher specifies topics for Writing period	* Students select their own Writing period topics
	* Teacher chooses picture or chapter books for read alouds	* Students request specific titles or place books on Readers'/ Writers' Chair
	* Teacher guides/leads discussion of literature read or listened to	* Students take initiative in oral or written responses
	* Teacher conducts "Elaborated" lessons on *ch/sh* digraphs in Reading period	* Teacher provides one-to-one word ID help during "Private Read" time in Reading period
	* Teacher conducts "Brief" lesson on topic brainstorming and selection during Writing period	* Teacher does "Impromptu" Writing period lesson on use of emphasis cues (bold, caps, underline) following student request for help
Contextualized Skill/Strategy Instruction	* Teacher discusses/demonstrates oral reading fluency strategies prior to practice during paired "Free Read" in Reading period	* Teacher models expressive, fluent oral during class read-aloud times
	* Teacher conducts "Brief" lesson on visualizing prior to reading a chapter book section devoid of illustrations	* Teacher and student make predictions while buddy reading with individual child during DEAR time

on second-grade students' use of and attitudes toward literature.

Second, our study confirms that reading strategy instruction can be taught effectively with and through literature. As recommended by a number of writers (e.g., Tompkins & McGee, 1993; Trachtenburg, 1990a; Weisman, 1992; Yopp & Yopp, 1992), we found that strategically timed and placed instruction in selective reading abilities could be taught efficiently and with transfer when placed in the context of authentic texts. Thus, our study supports Block's (1993) finding that elementary students can acquire reading and thinking strategies within a literature-based environment.

Our research also goes beyond Morrow's (1992) work, in which she reported mixed findings with respect to the students' growth in reading achievement. Morrow relied on the existing basal reading program for skill and strategy instruction and did not tie it directly to the literature enrichment activities that were added to the second-grade literacy curriculum. Thus, the skill and strategy instruction was not as integrated with and contextually bound to the literature as it was in the present study. We suggest that Jim's students demonstrated the significant reading growth they did because the reading and language arts strategies he taught were so intimately embedded in the literature (e.g., Raphael & Hiebert, 1996; Roller, 1996; Routman, 1988, 1991; Tompkins & McGee, 1993).

We must temper the preceding with the acknowledgment that not all students in Jim's class demonstrated significant growth in reading and language arts abilities. Jim's greatest frustration throughout the school year was the difficulty he had finding ways to enable some children to make the literacy breakthroughs he so desperately hoped for. Whereas students like Jason, Lafayette, and Tiffany, who were very much beginning readers and writers in August, demonstrated significant growth across the school year, other students, Shawn and Terrence in particular, although showing signs of literacy growth, were still functionally beginning readers in June. Just as highly individualized, one-on-one programs like Reading Recovery do not reach all children (e.g., Center, Wheldall, Freeman, Outhred, & McNaught, 1995; Hiebert, 1994; Pinnell et al., 1994; Shanahan & Barr, 1995), it would be naive to expect that a classroom-based literature/strategies program would be 100% successful. Jim struggled along with certain students throughout the school year to find strategies, materials, balances, or whatever that would unlock some literacy doors; it remained a pall for Jim that some keys were never found.

Third, we failed to find the competition between skills teaching and literature usage that various writers and researchers had predicted. In spite of arguments that skill or strategy instruction detracts from "learning to read by reading" (Cox & Zarillo, 1993, p. 16), that infusing skills into reading minilessons may give readers "wrong advice" (Atwell, 1987, p. 216), or that teaching skills with literature defames the integrity of the literature much like a "mutilated flower" (Hade, 1990, p. 192), we no found evidence of this occurring. Jim's children understood that during part of the reading strategies time they learned how to

pronounce words and understand meanings in sentences, paragraphs, and stories. They also understood that the purpose of all this was so that they could become better readers and consequently relish literature and learn from books. Trachtenburg (1990b, p. 192) argued that teaching children reading strategies through literature "is much more humane than shoveling a book down their throats so that they may digest a vowel." We believe that Jim's second graders viewed books, authors, and literature with great reverence, both because they had innumerable opportunities to experience literature and because they grew in ability to read it through specially crafted instruction.

Fourth, we found that a literature/strategies environment was successful with struggling readers of diverse backgrounds. All of the students in Jim's class were "at risk" in that they were of minority groups, from low-income families, or both, and we found that they prospered by learning about language through literature. Morrow (1992) reported no differences in attitudes or achievement between the African American and European American second graders in her study, arguing that a literature-based program was equally sensible and appropriate for both mainstream and minority children. Other programs that integrate reading and language arts strategy instruction with literature have likewise been effective with diverse, low-income, or struggling readers in varied environments that include minority, low-income children in Southeastern schools (Hall, Prevatte, & Cunningham, 1995), elementary students in a Polynesian-Hawaiian school (Carroll, Wilson, & Au, 1996), struggling readers enrolled in a university-based summer reading program (Roller, 1996), students in an urban, Canadian, multicultural classroom (Dudley-Marling, 1996), and remedial readers and writers in a university literacy lab (Purcell-Gates, 1996). Although the specifics of these programs vary, they all share the common feature of providing students explicit, teacher-led reading and writing instruction within the context of literature and authentic literacy tasks.

Delpit's (1988) criticism of "process" approaches to literacy instruction as failing to provide sufficient explicit instruction in "power code literacy" for minority children has been interpreted as a wholesale maligning of whole language or literature-based perspectives. But Delpit is clear that it is the absence of explicit literacy instruction for minority children that she challenges, not the nature of such instruction. In fact, she favors the type of contextualized, explicit instruction contained in the programs cited previously and in our study: "Students must be *taught* the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors" (Delpit, 1995, p. 45).

Strickland (1994) described characteristics of a literacy program appropriate for African American learners placed at risk. Included was the presence of contextualized reading and writing strategy instruction that incorporates authentic, whole texts. Ladson-Billings (1994) described "culturally relevant teaching" for African American children, and she suggested that characteristics of successful teachers were

individuals who did not "teach skills in an isolated, disconnected way" but rather "embedded reading instruction within larger contexts" that included children's literature (p. 117).

Strickland (1994) acknowledged that her principles for teaching African American students "are appropriate for any child, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or intellect" (p. 334). She cautioned teachers, however, that this does not imply a "one-size-fits-all curriculum." Rather, she asserted that sound instructional principles need to be adapted to accommodate the "great differences among the children we teach." When asked whether her description of culturally relevant teaching isn't just "good teaching," Ladson-Billings (1995) responded: "While I do not deny that it is good teaching, I pose a counter question: why does so little of it seem to occur in classrooms populated by African-American students?" (p. 484). This lament is similar to Delpit's (1995) call for providing culturally appropriate educational opportunities for the "other people's children" so many of us White teachers have in our classrooms. We believe that these tactful admonitions by African American teacher educators should be heeded to guard against the false assumption that simply teaching skills in context will accommodate minority, low-income (or any) students' full range of needs. The implementation of strategy/literature based program does not absolve a teacher from providing a broader thoughtful, sensitive, individualized instructional program.

Conclusion

We believe that our study provides evidence for the efficacy of teaching students reading and language arts strategies within a literature-based environment, recognizing that there are multiple models for accomplishing this objective. We also argue that the framework that seeks to balance literature envisionment with contextualized skill/strategy instruction in the curriculum dimension and teacher-initiated and responsive teaching in the instruction dimension has utility for describing and explaining our findings.

We believe that our data can be synthesized to two fundamental findings: (a) Second-grade students became more proficient in reading and writing abilities. (b) Second-grade students grew in knowledge, interest, and attitudes toward reading, writing, and literature. One might inquire about an association between these findings. Did "a" cause "b"? That is, did the students develop knowledge about and appreciation for books, literature, and literacy because they were more competent and confident as readers and language users (i.e., contextualized skill/strategy instruction enabled students to develop literary knowledge and appreciation)? Or did "b" cause "a"? That is, did the students become more skillful and strategic readers and writers because they were provided multiple opportunities to engage with high quality literature and literary experiences (i.e., literature exposure/interaction/practice enhanced reading abilities/skills)? Or might both "a" and "b" be a function of another singular or conflux of factors?

Although this study did not formally address relationships among such factors, causal or otherwise, we offer the following opinion. We suggest that there is a bi-directional, mutually reinforcing relationship between the presence

of literature envisionment and contextualized strategy instruction. The immersion in literature and the embedded strategy instruction created a kind of symbiotic, synergistic relationship in which each program characteristic contributed to and fed off the other. In other words, the literature enhanced students' reading and writing fluency, and their developing literacy abilities promoted their literary knowledge and appreciation. This occurred within a complex, multifaceted, interactive environment involving the children, their teacher, and the curricular and instructional program.

We do not have a formula, 5 easy steps, or 10 rules to success to recommend. Rather, as in any social community, we believe that those involved in any unique learning environment must learn to orchestrate the elegant dance of understandings, routines, and expectations to function productively. However, given the reality of classroom life involving teachers and children who are all diverse in background, interests, experiences, and abilities, we are confident in asserting that achieving a productive, effective learning environment indeed involves a number of delicate balances.

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